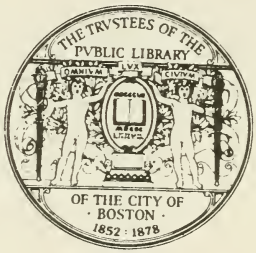
Boston
Public Library



Gift of

BEATTY ESTATE

H. de Noailles

MEMOIRS

OF

MARGARET FULLER OSSOLI.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

"Only a learned and a manly soul
I purposed her, that should with even powers
The rock, the spindle, and the shears control
Of destiny, and spin her own free hours."

BEN JONSON.

"Però che ogni diletto nostro è doglia
Sta in sì e nò saper, voler, potere;
Adunque quel sol può, che col dovere
Ne trae la ragion fuor di sua soglia.

Adunque tu' lettor di queste note,
S'a te vuoi esser buono, e agli altri caro,
Vogli sempre poter quel che tu debbi."

LEONARDO DA VINCI.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET
Publisher in Ordinar to Her Majesty.
1852.

LONDON:
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

PAGE

IV. CONCORD. *By R. W. Emerson, (continued.)*

SELF-ESTEEM 1
BOOKS 9
CRITICISM 15
NATURE 42
ART 45
LETTERS 64
FRIENDSHIP 66
PROBLEMS OF LIFE 82
WOMAN, OR ARTIST? 86
HEROISM 91
TRUTH 98
ECSTASY 105
CONVERSATION 110

V. BOSTON. *By R. W. Emerson* 119
CONVERSATIONS ON THE FINE ARTS . . . 151

PAGE

VI. JAMAICA PLAIN 169

First Impressions 171

A Clue 177

Transcendentalism 181

Genius 191

The Dial 198

The Woman 208

The Friend 221

Socialism 266

Credo 278

Self-sovereignty 295

MEMOIRS

OF

MARGARET FULLER OSSOLI.

VISITS TO CONCORD,

(*Continued.*)

SELF-ESTEEM.

MARGARET at first astonished and repelled us by a complacency that seemed the most assured since the days of Scaliger. She spoke, in the quietest manner, of the girls she had formed, the young men who owed everything to her, the fine companions she had long ago exhausted. In the coolest way, she said to her friends, "I now know all the people worth knowing in America, and I find no intellect comparable to my own." In vain, on one occasion, I professed my reverence for a youth of genius, and my curiosity in his future,—"O no, she was intimate with his mind,' and I "spoiled him, by overrating him." Mean-

time, we knew that she neither had seen, nor would see, his subtle superiorities.

I have heard, that from the beginning of her life, she idealized herself as a sovereign. She told —— she early saw herself to be intellectually superior to those around her, and that for years she dwelt upon the idea, until she believed that she was not her parents' child, but an European princess confided to their care. She remembered, that, when a little girl, she was walking one day under the apple-trees with such an air and step, that her father pointed her out to her sister, saying, *Incedit regina.* And her letters sometimes convey these exultations, as the following, which was written to a lady, and which contained Margaret's translation of Goethe's "Prometheus."

"TO ——.

"1838.—Which of us has not felt the questionings expressed in this bold fragment? Does it not seem, were we gods, or could steal their fire, we would make men not only happier, but free,—glorious? Yes, my life is strange; thine is strange. We are, we shall be, in this life,

mutilated beings, but there is in my bosom a faith, that I shall see the reason: a glory, that I can endure to be so imperfect; and a feeling, ever elastic, that fate and time shall have the shame and the blame, if I am mutilated. I will do all I can,—and, if one cannot succeed, there is a beauty in martyrdom.

"Your letters are excellent. I did not mean to check your writing, only I thought that you might wish a confidence that I must anticipate with a protest. But I take my natural position always: and the more I see, the more I feel that it is regal. Without throne, sceptre, or guards, still a queen."

It is certain that Margaret occasionally let slip, with all the innocence imaginable, some phrase betraying the presence of a rather mountainous ME, in a way to surprise those who knew her good sense. She could say, as if she were stating a scientific fact, in enumerating the merits of somebody, "He appreciates *me*." There was something of hereditary organization in this, and something of unfavourable circumstance in the fact, that she had in early life no companion, and

few afterwards, in her finer studies; but there was also an ebullient sense of power, which she felt to be in her, which as yet had found no right channels. I remember she once said to me, what I heard as a mere statement of fact, and nowise as unbecoming, that "no man gave such invitation to her mind as to tempt her to a full expression; that she felt a power to enrich her thought with such wealth and variety of embellishment as would, no doubt, be tedious to such as she conversed with."

Her impatience she expressed as she could. "I feel within myself," she said, "an immense force, but I cannot bring it out. It may sound like a joke, but I do feel something corresponding to that tale of the Destinies falling in love with Hermes."

In her journal, in the summer of 1844, she writes :—"Mrs. Ware talked with me about education,—wilful education,—in which she is trying to get interested. I talk with a Goethean moderation on this subject, which rather surprises her and ——, who are nearer the entrance of the studio. I am really old on this subject. In near eight years' experience, I have learned as much

as others would in eighty, from my great talent at explanation, tact in the use of means, and immediate and invariable power over the minds of my pupils. My wish has been, to purify my own conscience, when near them; give clear views of the aims of this life; show them where the magazines of knowledge lie; and leave the rest to themselves and the Spirit, who must teach and help them to self-impulse. I told Mrs. W. it was much if we did not injure them; if they were passing the time in a way that was *not bad,* so that good influences have a chance. Perhaps people in general must expect greater outward results, or they would feel no interest."

Again: "With the intellect I always have, always shall, overcome; but that is not the half of the work. The life, the life! O, my God! shall the life never be sweet?"

I have inquired diligently of those who saw her often, and in different companies, concerning her habitual tone, and something like this is the report:—In conversation, Margaret seldom, except as a special grace, admitted others upon an equal ground with herself. She was exceedingly

tender, when she pleased to be, and most cherishing in her influence; but to elicit this tenderness it was necessary to submit first to her personally. When a person was overwhelmed by her, and answered not a word, except, "Margaret, be merciful to me, a sinner," then her love and tenderness would come like a seraph's, and often an acknowledgment that she had been too harsh, and even a craving for pardon, with a humility,—which, perhaps, she had caught from the other. But her instinct was not humility,—that was always an afterthought.

This arrogant tone of her conversation, if it came to be the subject of comment, of course, she defended, and with such broad good nature, and on grounds of simple truth, as were not easy to set aside. She quoted from Manzoni's *Carmagnola*, the lines:—

> "Tolga il ciel che alcuno
> Piu altamente di me pensi ch'io stesso."

"God forbid that any one should conceive more highly of me than I myself." Meantime, the tone of her journals is humble, tearful, religious, and rises easily into prayer.

I am obliged to an ingenious correspondent for

the substance of the following account of this idiosyncracy:—

Margaret was one of the few persons who looked upon life as an art, and every person not merely as an artist, but as a work of art. She looked upon herself as a living statue, which should always stand on a polished pedestal, with right accessories, and under the most fitting lights. She would have been glad to have everybody so live and act. She was annoyed when they did not, and when they did not regard her from the point of view which alone did justice to her. No one could be more lenient in her judgments of those whom she saw to be living in this light. Their faults were to be held as "the disproportions of the ungrown giant." But the faults of persons who were unjustified by this ideal, were odious. Unhappily, her constitutional self-esteem sometimes blinded the eyes that should have seen that an idea lay at the bottom of some lives which she did not quite so readily comprehend as beauty; that truth had other manifestations than those which engaged her natural sympathies; that sometimes the soul illuminated only the smallest arc—

of a circle so large that it was lost in the clouds of another world.

This apology reminds me of a little speech once made to her, at his own house, by Dr. Channing, who held her in the highest regard: "Miss Fuller, when I consider that you are and have all that Miss —— has so long wished for, and that you scorn her, and that she still admires you,—I think her place in heaven will be very high."

But qualities of this kind can only be truly described by the impression they make on the bystander; and it is certain that her friends excused in her, because she had a right to it, a tone which they would have reckoned intolerable in any other. Many years since, one of her earliest and fastest friends quoted Spenser's sonnet as accurately descriptive of Margaret:—

"Rudely thou wrongest my dear heart's desire,
In finding fault with her too portly pride;
The thing which I do most in her admire
Is of the world unworthy most envied.
For, in those lofty looks is close implied
Scorn of base things, disdain of foul dishonour,
Threatening rash eyes which gaze on her so wide
That loosely they ne dare to look upon her:
Such pride is praise, such portliness is honour,
That bolden'd innocence bears in her eyes;

And her fair countenance, like a goodly banner,
Spreads in defiance of all enemies.
Was never in this world aught worthy tried,
Without a spark of some self-pleasing pride."

BOOKS.

She had been early remarked for her sense and sprightliness, and for her skill in school exercises. Now she had added wide reading, and of the books most grateful to her. She had read the Italian poets by herself, and from sympathy. I said that, by the leading part she naturally took, she had identified herself with all the elegant culture in this country. Almost every person who had any distinction for wit, or art, or scholarship, was known to her; and she was familiar with the leading books and topics. There is a kind of undulation in the popularity of the great writers, even of the first rank. We have seen a recent importance given to Behmen and Swedenborg; and Shakspeare has unquestionably gained with the present generation. It is distinctive, too, of the taste of the period,—the new vogue given to the genius of Dante. An edition of Cary's translation, reprinted in Boston many years ago, was rapidly sold; and, for the last twenty years, all

studious youths and maidens have been reading the Inferno. Margaret had very early found her way to Dante, and from a certain native preference which she felt or fancied for the Italian genius. The following letter, though of a later date, relates to these studies:—

TO R. W. E.

"*December*, 1842.—When you were here, you seemed to think I might perhaps have done something on the *Vita Nuova;* and the next day I opened the book, and considered how I could do it. But you shall not expect that, either, for your present occasion. When I first mentioned it to you, it was only as a piece of Sunday work, which I thought of doing for you alone; and because it has never seemed to me you entered enough into the genius of the Italian to apprehend the mind, which has seemed so great to me, and a star unlike, if not higher than all the others in our sky. Else, I should have given you the original, rather than any version of mine. I intended to translate the poems, with which it is interspersed, into plain prose. Milnes and Longfellow have tried each their power at doing it in verse, and have done

better, probably, than I could, yet not well. But this would not satisfy me for the public. Besides, the translating Dante is a piece of literary presumption, and challenges a criticism to which I am not sure that I am, as the Germans say, *gewachsen*. Italian, as well as German, I learned by myself, unassisted, except as to the pronunciation. I have never been brought into connexion with minds trained to any severity in these kinds of elegant culture. I have used all the means within my reach; but my not going abroad is an insuperable defect in the technical part of my education. I was easily capable of attaining excellence, perhaps mastery, in the use of some implements. Now I know, at least, *what I do not know;* and I get along by never voluntarily going beyond my depth, and, when called on to do it, stating my incompetency. At moments when I feel tempted to regret that I could not follow out the plan I had marked for myself, and develop powers which are not usual here, I reflect, that if I had attained high finish and an easy range in these respects, I should not have been thrown back on my own resources, or known them as I do. But Lord Brougham should not translate Greek orations,

nor a maid-of-all-work attempt such a piece of delicate handling as to translate the *Vita Nuova*."

Here is a letter, without date, to another correspondent :—

"To-day, on reading over some of the sonnets of Michel Angelo, I felt them more than usual. I know not why I have not read them thus before, except that the beauty was pointed out to me at first by another, instead of my coming unexpectedly upon it of myself. All the great writers, all the persons who have been dear to me, I have found and chosen ; they have not been proposed to me. My intimacy with them came upon me as natural eras, unexpected and thrice dear. Thus I have appreciated, but not been able to feel, Michel Angelo as a poet.

"It is a singular fact in my mental history, that, while I understand the principles and construction of language much better than formerly, I cannot read so well *les langues méridionales*. I suppose it is that I am less *méridionale* myself. I understand the genius of the north better than I did."

Dante, Petrarca, Tasso, were her friends among

the old poets,—for to Ariosto she assigned a far lower place,—Alfieri and Manzoni, among the new. But what was of still more import to her education, she had read German books, and for the three years before I knew her, almost exclusively,—Lessing, Schiller, Richter, Tieck, Novalis, and, above all, GOETHE. It was very obvious, at the first intercourse with her, though her rich and busy mind never reproduced undigested reading, that the last writer,—food or poison,—the most powerful of all mental reagents,—the pivotal mind in modern literature,—for all before him are ancients, and all who have read him are moderns,—that this mind had been her teacher, and of course, the place was filled, nor was there room for any other. She had that symptom which appears in all the students of Goethe,—an ill-dissembled contempt of all criticism on him which they hear from others, as if it were totally irrelevant; and they are themselves always preparing to say the right word,—a *prestige* which is allowed, of course, until they do speak: when they have delivered their volley, they pass, like their foregoers, to the rear.

The effect on Margaret was complete. She was perfectly timed to it. She found her moods met,

her topics treated, the liberty of thought she loved, the same climate of mind. Of course, this book superseded all others, for the time, and tinged deeply all her thoughts. The religion, the science, the catholicism, the worship of art, the mysticism and dæmonology, and withal the clear recognition of moral distinctions as final and eternal, all charmed her; and Faust, and Tasso, and Mignon, and Makaria, and Iphigenia, became irresistible names. It was one of those agreeable historical coincidences, perhaps invariable, though not yet registered, the simultaneous appearance of a teacher and of pupils, between whom exists a strict affinity. Nowhere did Goethe find a braver, more intelligent, or more sympathetic reader. About the time I knew her, she was meditating a biography of Goethe, and did set herself to the task in 1837. She spent much time on it, and has left heaps of manuscripts, which are notes, transcripts, and studies in that direction. But she wanted leisure and health to finish it, amid the multitude of projected works with which her brain teemed. She used great discretion on this point, and made no promises. In 1839, she published her translation of Eckermann, a book which makes the basis of the translation of Eckermann since published

in London, by Mr. Oxenford. In the Dial, in July, 1841, she wrote an article on Goethe, which is, on many accounts, her best paper.

CRITICISM.

Margaret was in the habit of sending to her correspondents, in lieu of letters, sheets of criticism on her recent readings. From such quite private folios, never intended for the press, and, indeed, containing here and there names and allusions, which it is now necessary to veil or suppress, I select the following notices, chiefly of French books. Most of these were addressed to me, but the three first to an earlier friend.

"Reading Schiller's introduction to the Wars of the League, I have been led back to my old friend, the Duke of Sully, and his charming king. He was a man, that Henri! How gay and graceful seems his unflinching frankness! He wore life as lightly as the feather in his cap. I have become much interested, too, in the two Guises, who had seemed to me mere intriguers, and not of so splendid abilities, when I was less able to appreciate the difficulties they daily and hourly

combated. I want to read some more books about them. Do you know whether I could get Matthieu, or De Thou, or the Memoirs of the House of Nevers?

"I do not think this is a respectable way of passing my summer, but I cannot help it.

"I never read any life of Molière. Are the facts very interesting? You see clearly in his writing what he was: a man not high, not poetic; but firm, wide, genuine, whose clearsightedness only made him more noble. I love him well that he could see without showing these myriad mean faults of the social man, and yet make no nearer approach to misanthropy than his Alceste. These witty Frenchmen, Rabelais, Montaigne, Molière, are great as were their marshals and *preux chevaliers;* when the Frenchman tries to be poetical, he becomes theatrical, but he can be romantic, and also dignified, maugre shrugs and snuff-boxes."

"*Thursday Evening.*—Although I have been much engaged these two days, I have read Spiridion twice. I could have wished to go through it the second time more at leisure, but as I am going

away, I thought I would send it back, lest it should be wanted before my return.

"The development of the religious sentiment being the same as in Hélene, I at first missed the lyric effusion of that work, which seems to me more and more beautiful, as I think of it more. This, however, was a mere prejudice, of course, as the thought here is poured into a quite different mould, and I was not troubled by it on a second reading.

"Again, when I came to look at the work by itself, I thought the attempt too bold. A piece of character-painting does not seem to be the place for a statement of these wide and high subjects. For here the philosophy is not merely implied in the poetry and religion, but assumes to show a face of its own. And, as none should meddle with these matters who are not in earnest, so such will prefer to find the thought of a teacher or fellow-disciple expressed as directly and as bare of ornament as possible.

"I was interested in De Wette's Theodor, and that learned and (*on dit*) profound man seemed to me so to fail, that I did not finish the book, nor try whether I could believe the novice should ever arrive at manly stature.

" I am not so clear as to the scope and bearing of this book, as of that. I suppose if I were to read Lamennais, or L'Erminier, I should know what they all want or intend. And if you meet with *Les paroles d'un Croyant,* I will beg you to get it for me, for I am more curious than ever. I had supposed the view taken by these persons in France, to be the same with that of Novalis and the German Catholics, in which I have been deeply interested. But, from this book, it would seem to approach the faith of some of my friends here, which has been styled Psychotheism. And the gap in the theoretical fabric is the same as with them. I read with unutterable interest the despair of Alexis in his Eclectic course, his return to the teachings of external nature, his new birth, and consequent appreciation of poetry and music. But the question of Free-Will,—how to reconcile its workings with necessity and compensation,—how to reconcile the life of the heart with that of the intellect,—how to listen to the whispering breeze of Spirit, while breasting, as a man should, the surges of the world,—these enigmas Sand and her friends seem to have solved no better than M. F. and her friends.

" The practical optimism is much the same as ours, except that there is more hope for the masses—soon.

" This work is written with great vigour, scarce any faltering on the wing. The horrors are disgusting, as are those of every writer except Dante. Even genius should content itself in dipping the pencil in cloud and mist. The apparitions of Spiridion are managed with great beauty. As in Hélene, as in Novalis, I recognised, with delight, the eye that gazed, the ear that listened, till the spectres came, as they do to the Highlander on his rocky couch, to the German peasant on his mountain. How different from the vulgar eye which looks, but never sees! Here the beautiful apparition advances from the solar ray, or returns to the fountain of light and truth, as it should, when eagle eyes are gazing.

" I am astonished at her insight into the life of thought. She must know it through some man. Women, under any circumstances, can scarce do more than dip the foot in this broad and deep river; they have not strength to contend with the current. Brave, if they do not delicately shrink from the cold water. No Sibyls have existed like

those of Michel Angelo; those of Raphael are the true brides of a God, but not themselves divine. It is easy for women to be heroic in action, but when it comes to interrogating God, the universe, the soul, and above all, trying to live above their own hearts, they dart down to their nests like so many larks, and if they cannot find them, fret like the French Corinne. Goethe's Makaria was born of the stars. Mr. Flint's Platonic old lady a *lusus naturæ*, and the Dudevant has loved a philosopher.

"I suppose the view of the present state of Catholicism no way exaggerated. Alexis is no more persecuted than Abelard was, and is so, for the same reasons. From the examinations of the Italian convents in Leopold's time, it seems that the grossest materialism not only reigns, but is taught and professed in them. And Catholicism loads and infects as all dead forms do, however beautiful and noble during their lives." * *

GEORGE SAND, AGAIN.

"1839.—When I first knew George Sand, I thought I found tried the experiment I wanted. I did not value Bettine so much; she had not

pride enough for me; only now when I am sure of myself, would I pour out my soul at the feet of another. In the assured soul it is kingly prodigality; in one which cannot forbear, it is mere babyhood. I love *abandon* only when natures are capable of the extreme reverse. I knew Bettine would end in nothing, when I read her book. I knew she could not outlive her love.

"But in *Les Sept Cordes de la Lyre,* which I read first, I saw the knowledge of the passions, and of social institutions, with the celestial choice which rose above them. I loved Hélene, who could so well hear the terrene voices, yet keep her eye fixed on the stars. That would be my wish, also, to know all, then choose; I ever revered her, for I was not sure that I could have resisted the call of the Now, could have left the spirit, and gone to God. And, at a more ambitious age, I could not have refused the philosopher. But I hoped from her steadfastness, and thought I heard the last tones of a purified life:—Gretchen, in the golden cloud, raised above all past delusions, worthy to redeem and upbear the wise man, who stumbled into the pit of error while searching for truth.

"Still, in *André* and in *Jacques*, I traced the same high morality of one who had tried the liberty of circumstance only to learn to appreciate the liberty of law, to know that licence is the foe of freedom. And, though the sophistry of passion in these books disgusted me, flowers of purest hue seemed to grow upon the dank and dirty ground. I thought she had cast aside the slough of her past life, and began a new existence beneath the sun of a true Ideal.

"But here (in the *Lettres d'un Voyageur*) what do I see? An unfortunate bewailing her loneliness, bewailing her mistakes, writing for money! She has genius, and a manly grasp of mind, but not a manly heart! Will there never be a being to combine a man's mind and woman's heart, and who yet finds life too rich to weep over? Never?

"When I read in *Leone Lioni* the account of the jeweller's daughter's life with her mother, passed in dress and in learning to be looked at when dressed, *avec un front impassible*, it reminded me exceedingly of ——, and her mother. What a heroine she would be for Sand! She has the same fearless softness with Juliet, and a sportive

naïveté, a mixture of bird and kitten, unknown to the dupe of Lioni.

"If I were a man, and wished a wife, as many do, merely as an ornament or silken toy, I would take —— as soon as any I know. Her fantastic, impassioned, and mutable nature would yield an inexhaustible amusement. She is capable of the most romantic actions;—wild as the falcon, and voluptuous as the tuberose,—yet she has not in her the elements of romance, like a deeper and less susceptible nature. My cold and reasoning E., with her one love lying, perhaps, never to be unfolded, beneath such sheaths of pride and reserve, would make a far better heroine.

"Both these characters are natural, while S. and T. are *naturally factitious,* because so imitative, and her mother differs from Juliet and her mother, by the impulse a single strong character gave them. Even at this distance of time, there is a slight but perceptible taste of iron in the water.

"George Sand disappoints me, as almost all beings have, especially since I have been brought close to her person by the *Lettres d'un Voyageur.* Her remarks on Lavater seem really shallow, and

hasty, *à la mode du genre feminin*. No self-ruling Aspasia she, but a frail woman mourning over a lot. Any peculiarity in her destiny seems accidental. She is forced to this and that, to earn her bread forsooth!

"Yet her style,—with what a deeply smouldering fire it burns!—not vehement, but intense, like Jean Jacques."

ALFRED DE VIGNY.

"*Sept.* 1839.

"'La harpe tremble encore, et la flûte soupire.'

"Sometimes we doubt this, and think the music has finally ceased, so sultry still lies the air around us, or only disturbed by the fife and drum of talent, calling to the parade-ground of social life. The ear grows dull.

"'Faith asks her daily bread,
And Fancy is no longer fed.'

"So materialistic is the course of common life, that we *ask daily* new Messiahs from literature and art, to turn us from the Pharisaic observance of law, to the baptism of spirit. But stars arise upon our murky sky, and the flute *soupire* from the quarter where we least expect it.

"*La jeune France!* I had not believed in this youthful pretender. I thought she had no pure blood in her veins, no aristocratic features in her face, no natural grace in her gait. I thought her an illegitimate child of the generous, but extravagant youth of Germany. I thought she had been left at the foundling hospital, as not worth a parent's care, and that now, grown up, she was trying to prove at once her parentage and her charms by certificates which might be headed, Innocent Adultery, Celestial Crime, &c.

"The slight acquaintance I had with Hugo and company, did not dispel these impressions. And I thought Chateaubriand (far too French for my taste also,) belonged to *l'ancien régime,* and that Béranger and Courier stood apart. Nodier, Paul de Kock, Sue, Jules Janin, I did not know, except through the absurd reports of English reviewers; Le Maistre and Lamennais, as little.

"But I have now got a peep at this galaxy. I begin to divine the meaning of St. Simonianism, Cousinism, and the movement which the same causes have produced in belles-lettres. I perceive that *la jeune France* is the legitimate, though far younger sister of Germany; taught by her, but

not born of her, but of a common mother. I see, at least begin to see, what she has learned from England, and what the bloody rain of the revolution has done to fertilize her soil, naturally too light.

"Blessed be the early days when I sat at the feet of Rousseau, prophet sad and stately as any of Jewry! Every onward movement of the age, every downward step into the solemn depths of my own soul, recals thy oracles, O Jean Jacques! But as these things only glimmer upon me at present, clouds of rose and amber, in the perspective of a long, dim woodland glade, which I must traverse if I would get a fair look at them from the hill-top,—as I cannot, to say sooth, get the works of these always working geniuses, but by slow degrees, in a country that has no need of them till her railroads and canals are finished,—I need not jot down my petty impressions of the movement writers. I wish to speak of one among them, aided, honoured by them, but not of them. He is too *la jeune France*, rather the herald of a tourney, or the master of ceremonies at a patriotic festival, than a warrior for her battles, or an advocate to win her cause.

"The works of M. de Vigny having come in

my way, I have read quite through this thick volume.

"I read, a year since, in the London and Westminster, an admirable sketch of Armand Carrel. The writer speaks particularly of the use of which Carrel's experience of practical life had been to him as an author; how it had tempered and sharpened the blade of his intellect to the Damascene perfection. It has been of like use to De Vigny, though not in equal degree.

"De Vigny *passed,*—but for manly steadfastness, he would probably say *wasted,*—his best years in the army. He is now about forty; and we have in this book the flower of these best years. It is a night-blooming Cereus, for his days were passed in the duties of his profession. These duties, so tiresome and unprofitable in time of peace, were the ground in which the seed sprang up, which produced these many-leaved and calm night-flowers.

"The first portion of this volume, *Servitude et Grandeurs Militaires,* contains an account of the way in which he received his false tendency. Cherished on the 'wounded knees' of his aged father, he listened to tales of the great Frederic,

whom the veteran had known personally. After an excellent sketch of the king, he says: 'I expatiate here, almost in spite of myself, because this was the first great man whose portrait was thus drawn for me at home,—a portrait after nature,—and because my admiration of him was the first symptom of my useless love of arms,—the first cause of one of the most complete delusions of my life." This admiration for the great king remained so lively in his mind, that even Bonaparte in his gestures seemed to him, in later days, a plagiarist.

"At the military school, 'the drum stifled the voices of our masters, and the mysterious voices of books seemed to us cold and pedantic. Tropes and logarithms seemed to us only steps to mount to the star of the Legion of Honour,—the fairest star of heaven to us children.

"'No meditation could keep long in chains heads made constantly giddy by the noise of cannon and bells for the *Te Deum*. When one of our former comrades returned to pay us a visit in uniform, and his arm in a scarf, we blushed at our books, and threw them at the heads of our teachers. Our teachers were always reading us

bulletins from the *grande armée*, and our cries of *Vive l'Empereur* interrupted Tacitus and Plato. Our preceptors resembled heralds of arms, our study halls barracks, and our examinations reviews.'

"Thus was he led into the army; and, he says, 'It was only very late, that I perceived that my services were one long mistake, and that I had imported into a life altogether active, a nature altogether contemplative.'

"He entered the army at the time of Napoleon's fall, and, like others, wasted life in waiting for war. For these young persons could not believe that peace and calm were possible to France; could not believe that she could lead any life but one of conquest.

"As De Vigny was gradually undeceived, he says: 'Loaded with an ennui which I did not dream of in a life I had so ardently desired, it became a necessity to me to detach myself by night from the vain and tiresome tumult of military days. From these nights, in which I enlarged in silence the knowledge I had acquired from our public and tumultuous studies, proceeded my poems and books. From these days,

there remain to me these recollections, whose chief traits I here assemble around one idea. For not reckoning for the glory of arms, either on the present or future, I sought it in the souvenirs of my comrades. My own little adventures will not serve, except as frame to those pictures of the military life, and of the manners of our armies, all whose traits are by no means known.'

"And thus springs up, in the most natural manner, this little book on the army.

"It has the truth, the delicacy, and the healthiness of a production native to the soil; the merit of love-letters, journals, lyric poems, &c., written without any formal intention of turning life into a book, but because the writer could not help it. What, more than anything else, engaged the attention of De Vigny, was the false position of two beings towards a factitious society: the soldier, now that standing armies are the mode, and the poet, now that Olympic games or pastimes are not the mode. He has treated the first best, because with profounder *connoissance du fait*. For De Vigny is not a poet; he has only an eye to perceive the existence of these birds of heaven. But in few ways, except their own broken harp-

tone's thrill, have their peculiar sorrows and difficulties been so well illustrated. The character of the soldier, with its virtues and faults, is pourtrayed with such delicacy, that to condense would ruin. The peculiar reserve, the habit of duty, the beauty of a character which cannot look forward, and need not look back, are given with distinguished finesse.

"Of the three stories which adorn this part of the book, *Le Cachet Rouge* is the loveliest, *La Canne au Jonc* the noblest. Never was anything more sweetly naive than parts of *Le Cachet Rouge*. *La pauvre petite femme,* she was just such a person as my——. And then the farewell injunctions,—*du pauvre petite maré,*—the nobleness and the coarseness of the poor captain. It is as original as beautiful, *c'est dire beaucoup.* In *La Canne au Jonc,* Collingwood, who embodies the high feeling of duty, is taken too raw out of a book,—his letters to his daughters. But the effect on the character of *le Capitaine Renaud,* and the unfolding of his interior life, are done with the spiritual beauty of Manzoni.

"*Cinq-Mars* is a romance in the style of Walter Scott. It is well brought out, figures in good

relief, lights well distributed, sentiment high, but nowhere exaggerated, knowledge exact, and the good and bad of human nature painted with that impartiality which becomes a man, and a man of the world. All right, no failure anywhere; also, no wonderful success, no genius, no magic. It is one of those works which I should consider only excusable as the amusement of leisure hours; and though few could write it, chiefly valuable to the writer.

"Here he has arranged, as in a bouquet, what he knew—and a great deal it is,—of the time of Louis XIII. as he has of the Regency in 'La Marechale d'Ancre,'—a much finer work, indeed one of the best-arranged and finished modern dramas. The Leonora Galigai is better than anything I have seen in Victor Hugo, and as good as Schiller. Stello is a bolder attempt. It is the history of three poets,—Gilbert, André Chenier, Chatterton. He has also written a drama called Chatterton, inferior to the story here. The 'marvellous boy' seems to have captivated his imagination marvellously. In thought, these productions are worthless; for taste, beauty of sentiment, and power of description, remark-

able. His advocacy of the poets' cause is about as effective and well-planned as Don Quixote's tourney with the windmill. How would you provide for the poet *bon homme* De Vigny?—from a joint-stock company Poet's Fund, or how?

"His translation of Othello, which I glanced at, is good for a Frenchman.

"Among his poems, La Frégate, La Sérieuse, Madame de Soubise, and Dolorida, please me especially. The last has an elegiac sweetness and finish, which are rare. It also makes a perfect gem of a cabinet picture. Some have a fine strain of natural melody, and give you at once the key-note of the situation, as this:—

> "'J'aime le son du cor le soir, au fond des bois,
> Soit qu'il chante,' &c.

And

> "'Qu'il est doux, qu'il est doux d'écouter les histoires,
> Des histoires du temps passé,
> Quand les branches des arbres sont noires,
> Quand la neige est essaisse, et charge un sol glacé,
> Quand seul dans un ciel pâle un peuplier s'élance,
> Quand sous le manteau blanc qui vient de le cacher
> L' immobile corbeau sur l'arbre se balance
> Comme la girouette au bout du long clocher.'

"These poems generally are only interesting as the leisure hours of an interesting man.

"De Vigny writes in an excellent style; soft, fresh, deliberately graceful. Such a style is like fine manners; you think of the words select, appropriate, rather than distinguished, or beautiful. De Vigny is a perfect gentleman; and his refinement is rather that of the gentleman than that of the poets whom he is so full of. In character, he looks naturally at those things which interest the man of honour and the man of taste. But for literature, he would have known nothing about the poets. He should be the elegant and instructive companion of social, not the priest or the minstrel of solitary hours.

"Neither has he logic or grasp with his reasoning powers, though of this also he is ambitious. Observation is his forte. To see, and to tell with grace, often with dignity and pathos, what he sees is his proper vocation. Yet, where he fails, he has too much tact and modesty to be despised; and we cannot enough admire the absence of faults in a man whose ambition soared so much beyond his powers, and in an age and a country so full of false taste. He is never seduced into sentimentality, paradox, violent contrast, and, above all, never makes the mistake of confounding the horrible

with the sublime. Above all, he never falls into the error, common to merely elegant minds, of painting leading minds '*en gigantesque.*' His Richelieu and his Bonaparte are treated with great calmness, and with dignified ease, almost as beautiful as majestic superiority.

"In this volume is contained all that is on record of the inner life of a man of forty years. How many suns, how many rains and dews, to produce a few buds and flowers, some sweet, but not rich fruit! We cannot help demanding of the man of talent that he should be like the 'orange tree, that busy plant.' But as Landor says, 'He who has any thoughts of any worth can, and probably will, afford to let the greater part lie fallow.'

"I have not made a note upon De Vigny's notions of abnegation, which he repeats as often as Dr. Channing the same watch-word of self-sacrifice. It is that my views are not yet matured, and I can have no judgment on the point."

BÉRANGER.

"*Sept.* 1839. — I have lately been reading some of Béranger's *chansons.* The hour was not

propitious. I was in a mood the very reverse of Roger Bontemps, and beset with circumstances the most unsuited to make me sympathise with the prayer—

"'Pardonnez la gaieté
De ma philosophie;'

yet I am not quite insensible to their wit, high sentiment, and spontaneous grace. A wit that sparkles all over the ocean of life, a sentiment that never puts the best foot forward, but prefers the tone of delicate humour, to the mouthings of tragedy; a grace so aerial, that it nowhere requires the aid of a thought, for in the light refrains of these productions, the meaning is felt as much as in the most pointed lines. Thus, in 'Les Mirmidons,' the refrain—

"'Mirmidons, race féconde,
Mirmidons
Enfin nous commandons,
Jupiter, livre le monde,
Aux mirmidons, aux mirmidons, (bis,)'

"The swarming of the insects about the dead lion is expressed as forcibly as in the most sarcastic passage of the chanson. In 'La Faridondaine' every sound is a witticism, and levels to the ground a bevy of what Byron calls 'garrison

people.' 'Halte là! ou la système des interpretations' is equally witty, though there the form seems to be as much in the saying, as in the comic melody of sound.

"In 'Adieux à la Campagne,' 'Souvenirs du Peuple,' 'La Déesse de la Liberté,' 'La Convoi de David,' a melancholy pathos breathes, which touches the heart the more that it is so unpretending. 'Ce n'est plus Lisette,' 'Mon Habit,' 'L'Indépendant,' 'Vous vieillirez, O ma belle Maitresse,' a gentle, graceful sadness wins us. In 'Le Dieu des Bonnes Gens,' 'Les Etoiles qui filent,' 'Les Conseils de Lise,' 'Treize à Table,' a noble dignity is admired, while such as 'La Fortune' and 'La Métempsycose' are inimitable in their childlike playfulness. 'Ma Vocation' I have had and admired for many years. He is of the pure ore, a darling fairy changling of great mother Nature; the poet of the people, and, therefore, of all in the upper classes sufficiently intelligent and refined to appreciate the wit and sentiment of the people. But his wit is so truly French, in its lightness and sparkling, feathering vivacity, that one like me, accustomed to the bitterness of English tonics, suicidal November melancholy, and Byronic wrath

of satire, cannot appreciate him at once. But when used to the gentler stimuli, we like them best, and we also would live awhile in the atmosphere of music and mirth, content if we have 'bread for to-day, and hope for to-morrow.'

"There are fine lines in his 'Cinq Mai;' the sentiment is as grand as Manzoni's, though not sustained by the same majestic sweep of diction, as,—

> "'Ce rocher repousse l'espérance,
> L'aigle n'est plus dans le secret des dieux,
> Il fatiguait la victoire à le suivre,
> Elle était lasse : il ne l'attendit pas.'

"And from 'La Gérontocratie, ou les infiniment petits :'—

> "'Combien d'imperceptibles êtres,
> De petits jésuites bilieux !
> De milliers d'autres petits prêtres,
> Lui portent de petits bons dieux.'

"But wit, poet, man of honour, tailor's grandson, and fairy's favourite, he must speak for himself, and the best that can be felt or thought of him cannot be said in the way of criticism. I will copy and keep a few of his songs. I should like to keep the whole collection by me, and take it up when my faith in human nature required the gentlest of fortifying draughts.

" How fine his answer to those who asked about the 'de' before his name!—

" 'Je suis vilain,
Vilain, vilain,' &c.

" 'J'honore une race commune,
Car, sensible, quoique malin,
Je n'ai flatté que l'infortune.'

" In a note to 'Couplets on M. Laisney, imprimeur à Peronne,' he says:—'It was in his printing-house that I was put to prentice; not having been able to learn orthography, he imparted to me the taste for poetry, gave me lessons in versification, and corrected my first essays.'

" Of Bonaparte,—

" 'Un conquérant, dans sa fortune altière,
Se fit un jeu des sceptres et des lois,
Et de ses pieds on peut voir la poussière
Empreinte encore sur le bandeau des rois.'

" I admire, also, 'Le Violon brisé,' for its grace and sweetness. How fine Béranger on Waterloo!—

" 'Its name shall never sadden verse of mine.'"

TO R. W. E.

" *Niagara, 1st June,* 1843.—I send you a token, made by the hands of some Seneca Indian lady. If you use it for a watch pocket, hang it, when

you travel, at the head of your bed, and you may dream of Niagara. If you use it for a purse, you can put in it alms for poets and artists, and the subscription-money you receive for Mr. Carlyle's book. His book, as it happened, you gave me as a birthday gift, and you may take this as one to you; for, on yours, was W.'s birthday, J.'s wedding-day, and the day of ——'s death, and we set out on this journey. Perhaps there is something about it on the purse. The 'number five which nature loves,' is repeated on it.

"Carlyle's book I have, in some sense, read. It is witty, full of pictures, as usual. I would have gone through with it, if only for the sketch of Samson, and two or three bits of fun which happen to please me. No doubt it may be of use to rouse the unthinking to a sense of those great dangers and sorrows. But how open is he to his own assault. He rails himself out of breath at the short-sighted, and yet sees scarce a step before him. There is no valuable doctrine in his book, except the Goethean, *Do to-day the nearest duty.* Many are ready for that, could they but find the way. This he does not show. His proposed measures say nothing. Educate the people. That

cannot be done by books, or voluntary effort, under these paralysing circumstances. Emigration! According to his own estimate of the increase of population, relief that way can have very slight effect. He ends as he began; as he did in Chartism. Everything is very bad. You are fools and hypocrites, or you would make it better. I cannot but sympathise with him about hero-worship; for I, too, have had my fits of rage at the stupid irreverence of little minds, which also is made a parade of by the pedantic and the worldly. Yet it is a good sign. Democracy is the way to the new aristocracy, as irreligion to religion. By-and-by, if there are great men, they will not be brilliaut exceptions, redeemers, but favourable samples of their kind.

"Mr. C.'s tone is no better than before. He is not loving, nor large; but he seems more healthy and gay.

"We have had bad weather here, bitterly cold. The place is what I expected: it is too great and beautiful to agitate or surprise: it satisfies: it does not excite thought, but fully occupies. All is calm; even the rapids do not hurry, as we see them in smaller streams. The sound, the sight, fill the senses and the mind.

"At Buffalo, some ladies called on us, who extremely regretted they could not witness our emotions, on first seeing Niagara. 'Many,' they said, 'burst into tears; but with those of most sensibility, the hands become cold as ice, and they would not mind if buckets of cold water were thrown over them!'"

NATURE.

Margaret's love of beauty made her, of course, a votary of nature, but rather for pleasurable excitement than with a deep poetic feeling. Her imperfect vision and her bad health were serious impediments to intimacy with woods and rivers. She had never paid,—and it is a little remarkable,—any attention to natural sciences. She neither botanized, nor geologized, nor dissected. Still she delighted in short country rambles, in the varieties of landscape, in pastoral country, in mountain outlines, and, above all, in the sea-shore. At Nantasket Beach, and at Newport, she spent a month or two of many successive summers. She paid homage to rocks, woods, flowers, rivers, and the moon. She spent a good deal of time out of doors, sitting, perhaps, with a book in some

sheltered recess commanding a landscape. She watched by day and by night, the skies and the earth, and believed she knew all their expressions. She wrote in her journal, or in her correspondence, a series of "moonlights," in which she seriously attempts to describe the light and scenery of successive nights of the summer moon. Of course, her raptures must appear sickly and superficial to an observer, who, with equal feeling, had better powers of observation.

Nothing is more rare than a talent to describe landscape, and, especially, skyscape, or cloudscape, although a vast number of letters, from correspondents between the ages of twenty and thirty, are filled with experiments in this kind. Margaret, in her turn, made many vain attempts, and, to a lover of nature, who knows that every day has new and inimitable lights and shades, one of these descriptions is as vapid as the raptures of a citizen arrived at his first meadow. Of course, he is charmed, but, of course, he cannot tell what he sees, or what pleases him. Yet Margaret often speaks with a certain tenderness and beauty of the impressions made upon her.

TO ——.

"*Fishkill,* 25 *Nov.* 1844.—You would have been happy, as I have been in the company of the mountains. They are companions both bold and calm. They exhilarate and they satisfy. To live, too, on the bank of the great river so long, has been the realization of a dream. Though I have been reading and thinking, yet this has been my life."

"After they were all in bed," she writes from the 'Manse,' in Concord, "I went out, and walked till near twelve. The moonlight filled my heart. These embowering elms stood in solemn black, the praying monastics of this holy night; full of grace, in every sense: their life so full, so hushed; not a leaf stirred."

"You say that nature does not keep her promise; but surely, she satisfies us now and then for the time. The drama is always in progress, but here and there she speaks out a sentence, full in its cadence, complete in its structure; it occupies, for the time, the sense and the thought. We have no care for promises. Will you say it is the superficialness of my life, that I have known

hours with men and nature, that bore their proper fruit,—all present ate and were filled, and there were taken up of the fragments twelve baskets full? Is it because of the superficial mind, or the believing heart, that I can say this?"

"Only through emotion do we know thee, Nature! We lean upon thy breast, and feel its pulses vibrate to our own. That is knowledge, for that is love. Thought will never reach it."

ART.

There are persons to whom a gallery is everywhere a home. In this country, the antique is known only by plaster casts, and by drawings. The BOSTON ATHENÆUM,—on whose sunny roof and beautiful chambers may the benediction of centuries of students rest with mine!—added to its library, in 1823, a small, but excellent museum of the antique sculpture, in plaster;—the selection being dictated, it is said, by no less an adviser than Canova. The Apollo, the Laocoon, the Venuses, Diana, the head of the Phidian Jove, Bacchus, Antinous, the Torso Hercules, the Discobolus, the Gladiator Borghese, the Apollino,—all these and more, the sumptuous gift of

Augustus Thorndike. It is much that one man should have power to confer on so many, who never saw him, a benefit so pure and enduring.

To these were soon added a heroic line of antique busts, and, at last, by Horatio Greenough, the Night and Day of Michel Angelo. Here was old Greece and old Italy brought bodily to New England, and a verification given to all our dreams and readings. It was easy to collect, from the drawing-rooms of the city, a respectable picture-gallery for a summer exhibition. This was also done, and a new pleasure was invented for the studious, and a new home for the solitary. The Brimmer donation, in 1838, added a costly series of engravings, chiefly of the French and Italian museums, and the drawings of Guercino, Salvator Rosa, and other masters. The separate chamber in which these collections were at first contained, made a favourite place of meeting for Margaret and a few of her friends, who were lovers of these works.

First led perhaps by Goethe, afterwards by the love she herself conceived for them, she read everything that related to Michel Angelo and Raphael. She read, pen in hand, Quatremère de

Quincy's lives of those two painters, and I have her transcripts and commentary before me. She read Condivi, Vasari, Benvenuto Cellini, Duppa, Fuseli, and Von Waagen,—great and small. Every design of Michel, the four volumes of Raphael's designs, were in the rich portfolios of her most intimate friend. "I have been very happy," she writes, "with four hundred and seventy designs of Raphael in my possession for a week."

These fine entertainments were shared with many admirers, and, as I now remember them, certain months about the years 1839, 1840, seem coloured with the genius of these Italians. Our walls were hung with prints of the Sistine frescoes: we were all petty collectors; and prints of Correggio and Guercino took the place, for the time, of epics and philosophy.

In the summer of 1839, Boston was still more rightfully adorned with the Allston Gallery; and the sculptures of our compatriots Greenough, and Crawford, and Powers, were brought hither. The following lines were addressed by Margaret to the Orpheus:—

CRAWFORD'S ORPHEUS.

"Each Orpheus must to the abyss descend,
For only thus the poet can be wise,—
Must make the sad Persephone his friend,
And buried love to second life arise;
Again his love must lose, through too much love,
Must lose his life by living life too true;
For what he sought below has pass'd above,
Already done is all that he would do;
Must tune all being with his single lyre;
Must melt all rocks free from their primal pain;
Must search all nature with his one soul's fire;
Must bind anew all forms in heavenly chain:
If he already sees what he must do,
Well may he shade his eyes from the far-shining view."

Margaret's love of art, like that of most cultivated persons in this country, was not at all technical, but truly a sympathy with the artist, in the protest which his work pronounced on the deformity of our daily manners; her co-perception with him of the eloquence of form; her aspiration with him to a fairer life. As soon as her conversation ran into the mysteries of manipulation and artistic effect, it was less trustworthy. I remember that in the first times when I chanced to see pictures with her, I listened reverently to her opinions, and endeavoured to see what she saw. But, on several occasions, finding myself unable to reach it, I came to suspect my guide, and to

believe, at last, that her taste in works of art, though honest, was not on universal, but on idiosyncratic, grounds. As it has proved one of the most difficult problems of the practical astronomer to obtain an achromatic telescope, so an achromatic eye, one of the most needed, is also one of the rarest instruments of criticism.

She was very susceptible to pleasurable stimulus, took delight in details of form, colour, and sound. Her fancy and imagination were easily stimulated to genial activity, and she erroneously thanked the artist for the pleasing emotions and thoughts that rose in her mind. So that, though capable of it, she did not always bring that highest tribunal to a work of art, namely, the calm presence of greatness, which only greatness in the object can satisfy. Yet the opinion was often well worth hearing on its own account, though it might be wide of the mark as criticism. Sometimes, too, she certainly brought to beautiful objects a fresh and appreciating love; and her written notes, especially on sculpture, I found always original and interesting. Here are some notes on the Athenæum Gallery of Sculpture, in August, 1840, which she sent me in manuscript:—

"Here are many objects worth study. There is Thorwaldsen's Byron. This is the truly beautiful, the ideal Byron. This head is quite free from the got-up, caricatured air of disdain, which disfigures most likenesses of him, as it did himself in real life; yet sultry, stern, all-craving, all-commanding. Even the heavy style of the hair, too closely curled for grace, is favourable to the expression of concentrated life. While looking at this head, you learn to account for the grand failure in the scheme of his existence. The line of the cheek and chin are here, as usual, of unrivalled beauty.

"The bust of Napoleon is here also, and will naturally be named, in connexion with that of Byron, since the one in letters, the other in arms, represented more fully than any other the tendency of their time; more than any other gave it a chance for reaction. There was another point of resemblance in the external being of the two, perfectly corresponding with that of the internal, a sense of which peculiarity drew on Byron some ridicule. I mean that it was the intention of nature, that neither should ever grow fat, but remain a Cassius in the commonwealth. And

both these heads are taken while they were at an early age, and so thin as to be still beautiful. This head of Napoleon is of a stern beauty. A head must be of a style either very stern or very chaste, to make a deep impression on the beholder; there must be a great force of will and withholding of resources, giving a sense of depth below depth, which we call sternness; or else there must be that purity, flowing as from an inexhaustible fountain through every lineament, which drives far off or converts all baser natures. Napoleon's head is of the first description; it is stern, and not only so, but ruthless. Yet this ruthlessness excites no aversion; the artist has caught its true character, and given us here the Attila, the instrument of fate to serve a purpose not his own. While looking on it, came full to mind the well-known lines,—

> "'Speak gently of his crimes:
> Who knows, Scourge of God, but in His eyes, those crimes
> Were virtues?'

His brows are tense and damp with the dews of thought. In that head you see the great future, careless of the black and white stones; and even

when you turn to the voluptuous beauty of the mouth, the impression remains so strong, that Russia's snows, and mountains of the slain, seem the tragedy that must naturally follow the appearance of such an actor. You turn from him, feeling that he is a product not of the day, but of the ages, and that the ages must judge him.

"Near him is a head of Ennius, very intellectual; self-centred and self-fed; but wrung and gnawed by unceasing thoughts.

"Yet, even near the Ennius and Napoleon, our American men look worthy to be perpetuated in marble or bronze, if it were only for their air of calm, unpretending sagacity. If the young American were to walk up an avenue lined with such effigies, he might not feel called to such greatness as the strong Roman wrinkles tell of, but he must feel that he could not live an idle life, and should nerve himself to lift an Atlas weight without repining or shrinking.

"The busts of Everett and Allston, though admirable as every-day likenesses, deserved a genius of a different order from Clevenger. Clevenger gives the man as he is at the moment, but does not show the possibilities of his existence.

Even thus seen, the head of Mr. Everett brings back all the age of Pericles, so refined and classic is its beauty. The two busts of Mr. Webster, by Clevenger and Powers, are the difference between prose,—healthy and energetic prose, indeed, but still prose,—and poetry. Clevenger's is such as we see Mr. Webster on any public occasion, when his genius is not called forth. No child could fail to recognise it in a moment. Powers' is not so good as a likeness, but has the higher merit of being an ideal of the orator and statesman at a great moment. It is quite an American Jupiter in its eagle calmness of conscious power.

" A marble copy of the beautiful Diana, not so spirited as the Athenæum cast. S. C—— thought the difference was one of size. This work may be seen at a glance; yet does not tire one after survey. It has the freshness of the woods, and of morning dew. I admire those long lithe limbs, and that column of a throat. The Diana is a woman's ideal of beauty; its elegance, its spirit, its graceful, peremptory air, are what we like in our own sex: the Venus is for men. The sleeping Cleopatra cannot be looked at enough; always her sleep seems sweeter and more graceful, always

more wonderful the drapery. A little Psyche, by a pupil of Bartolini, pleases us much thus far. The forlorn sweetness with which she sits there, crouched down like a bruised butterfly, and the languid tenacity of her mood, are very touching. The Mercury and Ganymede with the Eagle, by Thorwaldsen, are still as fine as on first acquaintance. Thorwaldsen seems the grandest and simplest of modern sculptors. There is a breadth in his thought, a freedom in his design, we do not see elsewhere.

"A spaniel, by Gott, shows great talent, and knowledge of the animal. The head is admirable: it is so full of playfulness and of doggish knowingness."

I am tempted, by my recollection of the pleasure it gave her, to insert here a little poem, addressed to Margaret by one of her friends, on the beautiful imaginative picture in the gallery of 1840, called "The Dream."

"A youth, with gentle brow and tender cheek,
Dreams in a place so silent, that no bird,
No rustle of the leaves his slumbers break;
Only soft tinkling from the stream is heard,
As in bright little waves it comes to greet
The beauteous One, and play upon his feet.

"On a low bank, beneath the thick shade thrown,
Soft gleams over his brown hair are flitting,
His golden plumes, bending, all lovely shone;
It seem'd an angel's home where he was sitting;
Erect, beside, a silver lily grew,
And over all the shadow its sweet beauty threw.

"Dreams he of life? O, then a noble maid
Toward him floats, with eyes of starry light,
In richest robes all radiantly array'd,
To be his ladye and his dear delight.
Ah no! the distance shows a winding stream;
No lovely ladye moves, no starry eyes do gleam.

"Cold is the air, and cold the mountains blue;
The banks are brown, and men are lying there,
Meagre and old; O, what have they to do
With joyous visions of a youth so fair?
He must not ever sleep as they are sleeping,
Onward through life he must be ever sweeping.

"Let the pale glimmering distance pass away;
Why in the twilight art thou slumbering there?
Wake, and come forth into triumphant day;
Thy life and deeds must all be great and fair.
Canst thou not from the lily learn true glory,
Pure, lofty, lowly?—such should be thy story.

"But no! thou lovest the deep-eyéd Past,
And thy heart clings to sweet remembrances;
In dim cathedral aisles thou'lt linger last,
And fill thy mind with flitting fantasies.
But know, dear One, the world is rich to-day,
And the unceasing God gives glory forth alway."

I have said she was never weary of studying Michel Angelo and Raphael; and here are some manuscript "notes" which she sent me one day, containing a clear expression of her feeling toward

each of these masters, after she had become tolerably familiar with their designs, as far as prints could carry her:—

"On seeing such works as these of Michel Angelo, we feel the need of a genius scarcely inferior to his own, which should invent some word, or some music, adequate to express our feelings, and relieve us from the Titanic oppression.

"'Greatness,' 'majesty,' 'strength,'—to these words we had before thought we attached their proper meaning. But now we repent that they ever passed our lips. Created anew by the genius of this man, we would create language anew, and give him a word of response worthy his sublime profession of faith. Could we not at least have reserved 'godlike' for him? For never till now did we appreciate the primeval vigour of creation, the instant swiftness with which thought can pass to deed; never till now appreciate the passage, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' which, be grateful, Michel! was clothed in human word before thee.

"One feels so repelled and humbled, on turning

from Raphael to his contemporary, that I could have hated him as a Gentile Choragus might hate the prophet Samuel. Raphael took us to his very bosom, as if we had been fit for disciples,—

> " 'Parting with smiles the hair upon the brow,
> And telling me none ever was preferr'd.'

This man waves his serpent wand over me, and beauty's self seems no better than a golden calf!

"I could not bear M. De Quincy for intimating that the archangel Michel could be jealous; yet I can easily see that he might have given cause, by undervaluing his divine contemporary. Raphael was so sensuous, so lovely and loving. All undulates to meet the eye, glides or floats upon the soul's horizon, as soft as is consistent with perfectly distinct and filled-out forms. The graceful Lionardo might see his pictures in moss; the beautiful Raphael on the cloud, or wave, or foliage; but thou, Michel, didst look straight upwards to the heaven, and grasp and bring thine down from the very sun of invention.

"How Raphael revels in the image! His life is all reproduced; nothing was abstract or conscious. Pantheism, Polytheism, Greek god of Beauty, Apollo Musagetes,—what need of life

beyond the divine work? 'I paint,' said he, 'from an idea that comes into my mind.'

"But thou, Michel, didst not only feel but see the divine Ideal. Thine is the conscious monotheism of Jewry. Like thy own Moses, even on the mount of celestial converse, thou didst ask thy God to show now his face, and didst write his words, not in the alphabet of flowers, but on stone tables.

"It is, indeed, the two geniuses of Greece and Jewry, which are reproduced in these two men. Thaumaturgus nature saw fit to wait but a very few years before using these moulds again, in smaller space. Would you read the Bible aright? look at Michel; the Greek Mythology? look at Raphael. Would you know how the sublime coexists with the beautiful, or the beautiful with the sublime? would you see power and truth regnant on the one side, with beauty and love harmonious and ministrant, but subordinate; or would you look at the other aspect of Deity?—study here. Would you open all the founts of marvel, admiration, and tenderness?—study both.

"One is not higher than the other; yet I am conscious of a slight rebuke from Michel, for

having so poured out my soul at the feet of his brother angel. He seems to remind of Mr. E.'s view, and ask, 'Why did you not question whether there was not aught else? why not reserve some inaccessible stronghold for me? why did you unlock the floodgates of the mind to such tides of emotion?' But there is no reality or permanence in this; it is only a reminder that the feminine part of human nature must not be dominant.

"The prophets of Michel Angelo excite all my admiration at the man capable of giving to such a physique an expression which commands it. The soul is worthily lodged in these powerful frames; and she has the ease and dignity of one accustomed to command, and to command servants able to obey her hests. Who else could have so animated such forms, that they are imposing, but never heavy? The strong man is made so majestic by his office, that you scarcely feel how strong he is. The wide folds of the drapery, the breadth of light and shade, are great as an thing in

"'The large utterance of the early gods.'

How they read, — these prophets and sibyls! Never did the always-baffled, always reaspiring

hope of the finite to compass the infinite find such expression, except in the *sehnsucht* of music. They are buried in the volume. They cannot believe that it has not somewhere been revealed, the word of enigma, the link between the human and divine, matter and spirit. Evidently, they hope to find it on the very next page. I have always thought, that clearly enough did nature and the soul's own consciousness respond to the craving for immortality. I have thought it great weakness to need the voucher of a miracle, or of any of those direct interpositions of a divine power, which, in common parlance, are alone styled revelation. When the revelations of nature seemed to me so clear, I had thought it was the weakness of the heart, or the dogmatism of the understanding, which had such need of *a book*. But in these figures of Michel the highest power seizes upon a scroll, hoping that some other mind may have dived to the depths of eternity for the desired pearl, and enable him, without delay, consciously to embrace the Everlasting Now.

"How fine the attendant intelligences! So youthful and fresh, yet so strong. Some merely docile and reverent, others eager for utterance

before the thought be known,—so firm is the trust in its value, so great the desire for sympathy. Others so brilliant in the attention of the inquiring eye, so intelligent in every feature, that they seem to divine the whole before they hear it.

" Zachariah is much the finer of the two prophets.

" Of the sibyls, the *Cumæa* would be disgusting, from her overpowering strength in the feminine form, if genius had not made her tremendous. Especially the bosom gives me a feeling of faintness and aversion I cannot express. The female breast looks made for the temple of sweet and chaste thoughts, while this is so formed as to remind you of the lioness in her lair, and suggest a word which I will not write.

" The *Delphica* is even beautiful, in Michel's fair, calm, noble style, like the mother and child asleep in the *Persica*, and *Night* in the casts I have just seen.

" The *Libica* is also more beautiful than grand. Her adjuncts are admirable. The elder figure, in the lowest pannel,—with what eyes of deep experience, and still unquenched enthusiasm, he sits meditating on the past! The figures at

top are fiery with genius, especially the melancholy one, worthy to lift any weight, if he did but know how to set about it. As it is, all his strength may be wasted, yet he no whit the less noble.

"But the *Persica* is my favourite above all. She is the true sibyl. All the grandeur of that wasted frame comes from within. The life of thought has wasted the fresh juices of the body, and hardened the sere leaf of her cheek to parchment; every lineament is sharp, every tint tarnished; her face is seamed with wrinkles,—usually as repulsive on a woman's face as attractive on a man. We usually feel, on looking at a woman, as if Nature had given them their best dower, and Experience could prove little better than a stepdame. But here, her high ambition and devotion to the life of thought gives her the masculine privilege of beauty in advancing years. Read on, hermitess of the world! what thou seekest is not there, yet thou dost not seek in vain.

"The adjuncts to this figure are worthy of it. On the right, below, those two divine sleepers, redeeming human nature, and infolding expectation in a robe of pearly sheen. Here is the sweetness of strength,—honey to the valiant; on

the other side, its awfulness,—meat to the strong man. His sleep is more powerful than the waking of myriads of other men. What will he do when he has recruited his strength in this night's slumber? What wilt thou sing of it, wild-haired child of the lyre?

"I admire the heavy fall of the sleeper's luxuriant hair, which reminds one of the final shutting down of night upon the sullen twilight.

"The other figures, too, are full of augury, sad but life-like, in its poetry. On the shield, how perfectly is the expression of being struck home to the heart given! I wish I could have that shield, in some shape. Only a single blow was needed; the hand was sure, the breast shrinking, but unresisting. Die, child of my affection, child of my old age! Let the blood follow to the hilt, for it is the sword of the Lord!

"In looking again, this shield is on the *Libica*, and that of the *Persica* represents conquest, not sacrifice.

"Over all these figures broods the spirit of prophecy. You see their sternest deed is under the theocratic form. There is pride in action, but no selfism in these figures.

"When I first came to Michel, I clung to the beautiful Raphael, and feared his Druidical axe. But now, after the sibyls of Michel, it is unsafe to look at those of Raphael; for they seem weak, which is not so, only seems so, beside the sterner ideal.

"The beauty of composition here is great, and you feel that Michel's works are looked at fragment-wise in comparison. Here the eye glides along so naturally, does so easily justice to each part."

LETTERS.

I fear the remark already made, on that susceptibility to details in art and nature, which precluded the exercise of Margaret's sound catholic judgment, must be extended to more than her connoisseurship. She *had* a sound judgment, on which, in conversation, she could fall back, and anticipate and speak the best sense of the largest company. But, left to herself, and in her correspondence, she was much the victim of Lord Bacon's *idols of the cave*, or self-deceived by her own phantasms. I have looked over volumes of her letters to me and others. They are full of probity, talent, wit, friendship, charity, and high aspiration. They are tainted with a mysticism,

which to me appears so much an affair of constitution, that it claims no more respect than the charity or patriotism of a man who has dined well, and feels better for it. One sometimes talks with a genial *bon vivant*, who looks as if the omelet and turtle have got into his eyes. In our noble Margaret, her personal feeling colours all her judgment of persons, of books, of pictures, and even of the laws of the world. This is easily felt in ordinary women, and a large deduction is civilly made on the spot by whosoever replies to their remark. But when the speaker has such brilliant talent and literature as Margaret, she gives so many fine names to these merely sensuous and subjective phantasms, that the hearer is long imposed upon, and thinks so precise and glittering nomenclature cannot be of mere *muscæ volitantes*, phœnixes of the fancy, but must be of some real ornithology, hitherto unknown to him. This mere feeling exaggerates a host of trifles into a dazzling mythology. But when one goes to sift it, and find if there be a real meaning, it eludes search. Whole sheets of warm, florid writing are here, in which the eye is caught by "sapphire," "heliotrope," "dragon," "aloes," "Magna Dea,"

"limboes," "stars," and "purgatory," but can connect all this, or any part of it, with no universal experience.

In short, Margaret often loses herself in sentimentalism. That dangerous vertigo nature in her case adopted, and was to make respectable. As it sometimes happens that a grandiose style, like that of the Alexandrian Platonists, or like Macpherson's Ossian, is more stimulating to the imagination of nations than the true Plato, or than the simple poet, so here was a head so creative of new colours, of wonderful gleams,—so iridescent, that it piqued curiosity, and stimulated thought, and communicated mental activity to all who approached her; though her perceptions were not to be compared to her fancy, and she made numerous mistakes. Her integrity was perfect, and she was led and followed by love, and was really bent on truth, but too indulgent to the meteors of her fancy.

FRIENDSHIP.

"Friends she must have, but in no one could find
A tally fitted to so large a mind."

It is certain that Margaret, though unattractive in person, and assuming in manners, so that the

girls complained that "she put upon them," or, with her burly masculine existence, quite reduced them to satellites, yet inspired an enthusiastic attachment. I hear from one witness, as early as 1829, that "all the girls raved about Margaret Fuller," and the same powerful magnetism wrought, as she went on, from year to year, on all ingenuous natures. The loveliest and the highest endowed women were eager to lay their beauty, their grace, the hospitalities of sumptuous homes, and their costly gifts, at her feet. When I expressed, one day, many years afterwards, to a lady who knew her well, some surprise at the homage paid her by men in Italy,—offers of marriage having there been made her by distinguished parties,—she replied: "There is nothing extraordinary in it. Had she been a man, any one of those fine girls of sixteen, who surrounded her here, would have married her: they were all in love with her, she understood them so well." She had seen many persons, and had entire confidence in her own discrimination of characters. She saw and foresaw all in the first interview. She had certainly made her own selections with great precision, and had not been disappointed. When pressed for a

reason, she replied, in one instance, "I have no good reason to give for what I think of ——. It is a dæmoniacal intimation. Everybody at —— praised her, but their account of what she said gave me the same unfavourable feeling. This is the first instance in which I have not had faith, if you liked a person. Perhaps I am wrong now; perhaps, if I saw her, a look would give me a needed clue to her character, and I should change my feeling. Yet I have never been mistaken in these intimations, as far as I recollect. I hope I am now."

I am to add, that she gave herself to her friendships with an entireness not possible to any but a woman, with a depth possible to few women. Her friendships, as a girl with girls, as a woman with women, were not unmingled with passion, and had passages of romantic sacrifice and of ecstatic fusion, which I have heard with the ear, but could not trust my profane pen to report. There were, also, the ebbs and recoils from the other party,—the mortal unequal to converse with an immortal,—ingratitude, which was more truly incapacity, the collapse of overstrained affections and powers. At all events, it is clear that Mar-

garet, later, grew more strict, and values herself with her friends on having the tie now "redeemed from all search after Eros." So much, however, of intellectual aim and activity mixed with her alliances, as to breathe a certain dignity and myrrh through them all. She and her friends are fellow-students with noblest moral aims. She is there for help and for counsel. "Be to the best thou knowest, ever true!" is her language to one. And that was the effect of her presence. Whoever conversed with her felt challenged by the strongest personal influence to a bold and generous life. To one she wrote,—"Could a word from me avail you, I would say, that I have firm faith that nature cannot be false to her child, who has shown such an unalterable faith in her piety towards her."

"These tones of my dear ——'s lyre are of the noblest. Will they sound purely through her experiences? Will the variations be faithful to the theme? Not always do those who most devoutly long for the Infinite, know best how to modulate their finite into a fair passage of the eternal Harmony.

"How many years was it the cry of my spirit,—

"'Give, give, ye mighty Gods!
Why do ye thus hold back?'—

and, I suppose, all noble young persons think for the time that they would have been more generous than the Olympians. But when we have learned the high lesson *to deserve*,—that boon of manhood,—we see they esteemed us too much, to give what we had not earned."

The following passages from her journal and her letters are sufficiently descriptive, each in its way, of her strong affections.

"At Mr. G.'s we looked over prints, the whole evening, in peace. Nothing fixed my attention so much as a large engraving of Madame Recamier in her boudoir. I have so often thought over the intimacy between her and Madame de Staël.

"It is so true that a woman may be in love with a woman, and a man with a man. I like to be sure of it, for it is the same love which angels feel, where—

"'Sie fragen nicht nach Mann und Weib.'

"It is regulated by the same law as that of love between persons of different sexes; only it is purely intellectual and spiritual. Its law is the desire of the spirit to realize a whole, which makes it seek in another being what it finds not in itself. Thus the beautiful seek the strong, and the strong the beautiful; the mute seeks the eloquent, &c.; the butterfly settles always on the dark flower. Why did Socrates love Alcibiades? Why did Körner love Schneider? How natural is the love of Wallenstein for Max; that of De Stael for De Recamier; mine for ——. I loved ——, for a time, with as much passion as I was then strong enough to feel. Her face was always gleaming before me; her voice was always echoing in my ear; all poetic thoughts clustered round the dear image. This love was a key which unlocked for me many a treasure which I still possess; it was the carbuncle which cast light into many of the darkest caverns of human nature. She loved me, too, though not so much, because her nature was 'less high, less grave, less large, less deep.' But she loved more tenderly, less passionately. She loved me, for I well remember her suffering when she first could feel my faults, and knew one part

of the exquisite veil rent away; how she wished to stay apart, and weep the whole day.

* * * * *

"I do not love her now with passion, but I still feel towards her as I can to no other woman. I thought of all this as I looked at Madame Recamier."

TO R. W. E.

"7*th Feb.* 1843.—I saw the letter of your new friend, and liked it much; only, at this distance, one could not be sure whether it was the nucleus or the train of a comet, that lightened afar. The dæmons are not busy enough at the births of most men. They do not give them individuality deep enough for truth to take root in. Such shallow natures cannot resist a strong head; its influence goes right through them. It is not stopped and fermented long enough. But I do not understand this hint of hesitation, because you have many friends already. We need not economise, we need not hoard these immortal treasures. Love and thought are not diminished by diffusion. In the widow's cruse is oil enough to furnish light for all the world."

TO R. W. E.

"15*th March*, 1842.—It is to be hoped, my best one, that the experiences of life will yet correct your vocabulary, and that you will not always answer the burst of frank affection by the use of such a word as 'flattery.'

"Thou knowest, O all-seeing Truth! whether that hour is base or unworthy thee, in which the heart turns tenderly towards some beloved object, whether stirred by an apprehension of its needs, or of its present beauty, or of its great promise; when it would lay before it all the flowers of hope and love, would soothe its weariness as gently as might the sweet south, and *flatter* it by as fond an outbreak of pride and devotion as is seen on the sunset clouds. Thou knowest whether these promptings, whether these longings, be not truer than intellectual scrutiny of the details of character; than cold distrust of the exaggerations even of heart. What we hope, what we think of those we love, is true, true as the fondest dream of love and friendship that ever shone upon the childish heart.

"The faithful shall yet meet a full-eyed love,

ready as profound, that never needs turn the key on its retirement, or arrest the stammering of an overweening trust."

TO ——

"I wish I could write you often, to bring before you the varied world-scene you cannot so well go out to unfold for yourself. But it was never permitted me, even where I wished it most. But the forest leaves fall unseen, and make a soil on which shall be reared the growths and fabrics of a nobler era. This thought rounds off each day. Your letter was a little golden key to a whole volume of thoughts and feelings. I cannot make the one bright drop, like champagne in ice, but must pour a full gush, if I speak at all, and not think whether the water is clear either."

With this great heart, and these attractions, it was easy to add daily to the number of her friends. With her practical talent, her counsel and energy, she was pretty sure to find clients and sufferers enough, who wished to be guided and supported. "Others," she said, "lean on this arm, which I have found so frail. Perhaps it is strong enough to have drawn a sword, but no better suited to be

used as a *bolt*, than that of Lady Catharine Douglas, of loyal memory." She could not make a journey, or go to an evening party, without meeting a new person, who wished presently to impart his history to her. Very early, she had written to ——, "My museum is so well furnished, that I grow lazy about collecting new specimens of human nature." She had soon enough examples of the historic development of rude intellect under the first rays of culture. But, in a thousand individuals, the process is much the same; and, like a professor too long pent in his college, she rejoiced in encountering persons of untutored grace and strength, and felt no wish to prolong the intercourse when culture began to have its effect. I find in her journal a characteristic note, on receiving a letter on books and speculations, from one whom she had valued for his heroic qualities in a life of adventure:—

"These letters of —— are beautiful, and moved me deeply. It looks like the birth of a soul. But I loved *thee*, fair, rich *earth*,—and all that is gone for ever. This that comes now, we know in much farther stages. Yet there is silver sweet in the tone, generous nobility in the impulses."

"Poor Tasso in the play offered his love and service too officiously to all. They all rejected it, and declared him mad, because he made statements too emphatic of his feelings. If I wanted only ideal figures to think about, there are those in literature I like better than any of your living ones. But I want far more. I want habitual intercourse, cheer, inspiration, tenderness. I want these for myself; I want to impart them. I have done as Timon did, for these last eight years. My early intercourses were more equal, because more natural. Since I took on me the vows of renunciation, I have acted like a prodigal. Like Timon, I have loved to give, perhaps not from beneficence, but from restless love. Now, like Fortunatus, I find my mistresses will not thank me for fires made of cinnamon; rather they run from too rich an odour. What shall I do? not curse, like him, (oh base!) nor dig my grave in the marge of the salt tide. Give an answer to my questions, dæmon! Give a rock for my feet, a bird of peaceful and sufficient song within my breast! I return to thee, my Father, from the husks that have been offered me. But I return as one who meant not to leave Thee."

Of course, she made large demands on her companions, and would soon come to sound their knowledge, and guess pretty nearly the range of their thoughts. There yet remained to command her constancy, what she valued more, the quality and affection proper to each. But she could rarely find natures sufficiently deep and magnetic. With her sleepless curiosity, her magnanimity, and her diamond-ring, like Annie of Lochroyan's, to exchange for gold or for pewter, she might be pardoned for her impatient questionings. To me, she was uniformly generous; but neither did I escape. Our moods were very different; and I remember, that, at the very time when I, slow and cold, had come fully to admire her genius, and was congratulating myself on the solid good understanding that subsisted between us, I was surprised with hearing it taxed by her with superficiality and halfness. She stigmatized our friendship as commercial. It seemed her magnanimity was not met, but I prized her only for the thoughts and pictures she brought me;—so many thoughts, so many facts yesterday,—so many today;—when there was an end of things to tell, the game was up: that, I did not know, as a

friend should know, to prize a silence as much as a discourse,—and hence a forlorn feeling was inevitable; a poor counting of thoughts, and a taking the census of virtues, was the unjust reception so much love found. On one occasion, her grief broke into words like these: "The religious nature remained unknown to you, because it could not proclaim itself, but claimed to be divined. The deepest soul that approached you was, in your eyes, nothing but a magic lantern, always bringing out pretty shows of life."

But as I did not understand the discontent then,—of course I cannot now. It was a war of temperaments, and could not be reconciled by words; but, after each party had explained to the uttermost, it was necessary to fall back on those grounds of agreement which remained, and leave the differences henceforward in respectful silence. The recital may still serve to show to sympathetic persons the true lines and enlargements of her genius. It is certain that this incongruity never interrupted for a moment the intercourse, such as it was, that existed between us.

I ought to add here, that certain mental changes brought new questions into conversation. In the

summer of 1840, she passed into certain religious states, which did not impress me as quite healthy, or likely to be permanent; and I said, "I do not understand your tone; it seems exaggerated. You are one who can afford to speak and to hear the truth. Let us hold hard to the common-sense, and let us speak in the positive degree."

And I find, in later letters from her, sometimes playful, sometimes grave allusions to this explanation.

"Is —— there? Does water meet water?—no need of wine, sugar, spice, or even a *soupçon* of lemon to remind of a tropical climate? I fear me not. Yet, dear positives, believe me superlatively yours, MARGARET."

The following letter seems to refer, under an Eastern guise, and with something of Eastern exaggeration of compliment too, to some such native sterilities in her correspondent:—

TO R. W. E.

"23*d Feb.* 1840.—I am like some poor traveller of the desert, who saw, at early morning, a distant palm, and toiled all day to reach it. All day he

toiled. The unfeeling sun shot pains into his temples; the burning air, filled with sand, checked his breath; he had no water, and no fountain sprung along his path. But his eye was bright with courage, for he said, 'When I reach the lonely palm, I will lie beneath its shade. I will refresh myself with its fruit. Allah has reared it to such a height, that it may encourage the wandering, and bless and sustain the faint and weary.' But when he reached it, alas! it had grown too high to shade the weary man at its foot. On it he saw no clustering dates, and its one draught of wine was far beyond his reach. He saw at once that it was so. A child, a bird, a monkey, might have climbed to reach it. A rude hand might have felled the whole tree; but the full-grown man, the weary man, the gentle-hearted, religious man, was no nearer to its nourishment for being close to the root; yet he had not force to drag himself further, and leave at once the aim of so many fond hopes, so many beautiful thoughts. So he lay down amid the inhospitable sands. The night dews pierced his exhausted frame; the hyena laughed, the lion roared, in the distance; the stars smiled upon him satirically from their

passionless peace; and he knew they were like the sun, as unfeeling, only more distant. He could not sleep for famine. With the dawn he arose. The palm stood as tall, as inaccessible, as ever; its leaves did not so much as rustle an answer to his farewell sigh. On and on he went, and came, at last, to a living spring. The spring was encircled by tender verdure, wild fruits ripened near, and the clear waters sparkled up to tempt his lip. The pilgrim rested, and refreshed himself, and looked back with less pain to the unsympathising palm, which yet towered in the distance.

"But the wanderer had a mission to perform, which must have forced him to leave at last both palm and fountain. So on and on he went, saying to the palm, 'Thou art for another;' and to the gentle waters, 'I will return.'

"Not far distant was he when the sirocco came, and choked with sand the fountain, and uprooted the fruit-trees. When years have passed, the waters will have forced themselves up again to light, and a new oasis will await a new wanderer. Thou, Sohrab, wilt, ere that time, have left thy bones at Mecca. Yet the remembrance of the

fountain cheers thee as a blessing; that of the palm haunts thee as a pang.

"So talks the soft spring gale of the Shah Nameh. Genuine Sanscrit I cannot write. My Persian and Arabic you love not. Why do I write thus to one who must ever regard the deepest tones of my nature as those of childish fancy or worldly discontent?"

PROBLEMS OF LIFE.

Already, too, at this time, each of the main problems of human life had been closely scanned and interrogated by her, and some of them had been much earlier settled. A worshipper of beauty, why could not she also have been beautiful?—of the most radiant sociality, why should not she have been so placed, and so decorated, as to have led the fairest and highest? In her journal is a bitter sentence, whose meaning I cannot mistake: "Of a disposition that requires the most refined, the most exalted tenderness, without charms to inspire it:—poor Mignon! fear not the transition through death; no penal fires can have in store worse torments than thou art familiar with already."

In the month of May, she writes:—"When all things are blossoming, it seems so strange not to blossom to; that the quick thought within cannot remould its tenement. Man is the slowest aloes, and I am such a shabby plant, of such coarse tissue. I hate not to be beautiful, when all around is so."

Again, after recording a visit to a family, whose taste and culture, united to the most liberal use of wealth, made the most agreeable of homes, she writes:—"Looking out on the wide view, I felt the blessings of my comparative freedom. I stand in no false relations. Who else is so happy? Here are these fair, unknowing children envying the depth of my mental life. They feel withdrawn by sweet duties from reality. Spirit! I accept; teach me to prize and use whatsoever is given me."

"At present," she writes elsewhere, "it skills not. I am able to take the superior view of life, and my place in it. But I know the deep yearnings of the heart and the bafflings of time will be felt again, and then I shall long for some dear hand to hold. But I shall never forget that my

curse is nothing, compared with that of those who have entered into those relations, but not made them real; who only *seem* husbands, wives, and friends."

"I remain fixed to be, without churlishness or coldness, as much alone as possible. It is best for me. I am not fitted to be loved, and it pains me to have close dealings with those who do not love, to whom my feelings are 'strange.' Kindness and esteem are very well. I am willing to receive and bestow them; but these alone are not worth feelings such as mine. And I wish I may make no more mistakes, but keep chaste for mine own people."

There is perhaps here, as in a passage of the same journal quoted already, an allusion to a verse in the ballad of the Lass of Lochroyan:—

> "O yours was gude, and gude enough,
> But aye the best was mine;
> For yours was o' the gude red gold,
> But mine o' the diamond fine."

"There is no hour of absolute beauty in all my past, though some have been made musical by heavenly hope, many dignified by intelligence. Long urged by the Furies, I rest again in the

temple of Apollo. Celestial verities dawn constellated as thoughts in the heaven of my mind.

"But, driven from home to home, as a renouncer, I get the picture and the poetry of each. Keys of gold, silver, iron, and lead, are in my casket. No one loves me; but I love many a good deal, and see, more or less, into their eventual beauty. Meanwhile, I have no fetter on me, no engagement, and, as I look on others,—almost every other,—can I fail to feel this a great privilege? I have nowise tied my hands or feet; yet the varied calls on my sympathy have been such, that I hope not to be made partial, cold, or ignorant, by this isolation. I have no child; but now, as I look on these lovely children of a human birth, what low and neutralizing cares they bring with them to the mother! The children of the muse come quicker, and have not on them the taint of earthly corruption."

Practical questions in plenty the days and months brought her to settle,—questions requiring all her wisdom, and sometimes more than all. None recurs with more frequency, at one period, in her journals, than the debate with herself,

whether she shall make literature a profession. Shall it be woman, or shall it be artist?

WOMAN, OR ARTIST?

Margaret resolved, again and again, to devote herself no more to these disappointing forms of men and women, but to the children of the muse. "The *dramatis personæ*," she said, "of my poems shall henceforth be chosen from the children of immortal Muse. I fix my affections no more on these frail forms." But it was vain: she rushed back again to persons, with a woman's devotion.

Her pen was a non-conductor. She always took it up with some disdain, thinking it a kind of impiety to attempt to report a life so warm and cordial, and wrote on the fly-leaf of her journal,—

"'*Scrivo sol per sfogar' l'interno.*'"

"Since you went away," she said, "I have thought of many things I might have told you, but I could not bear to be eloquent and poetical. It is a mockery thus to play the artist with life, and dip the brush in one's own heart's blood. One would fain be no more artist, or philosopher, or lover, or critic, but a soul ever rushing forth in tides of genial life."

"26 *Dec.* 1842.—I have been reading the lives of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and of Sir Kenelm Digby. These splendid, chivalrous, and thoughtful Englishmen are meat which my soul loveth, even as much as my Italians. What I demand of men, —that they could act out all their thoughts,— these have. They are lives;—and of such I do not care if they had as many faults as there are days in the year,—there is the energy to redeem them. Do you not admire Lord Herbert's two poems on life, and the conjectures concerning celestial life? I keep reading them."

"When I look at my papers, I feel as if I had never had a thought that was worthy the attention of any but myself; and 'tis only when, on talking with people, I find I tell them what they did not know, that my confidence at all returns."

"My verses,—I am ashamed when I think there is scarce a line of poetry in them,—all rhetorical and impassioned, as Goethe said of De Stael. However, such as they are, they have been overflowing drops from the somewhat bitter cup of my existence."

"How can I ever write with this impatience of detail? I shall never be an artist; I have no

patient love of execution; I am delighted with my sketch, but if I try to finish it, I am chilled. Never was there a great sculptor who did not love to chip the marble."

"I have talent and knowledge enough to furnish a dwelling for friendship, but not enough to deck with golden gifts a Delphi for the world."

"Then a woman of tact and brilliancy, like me, has an undue advantage in conversation with men. They are astonished at our instincts. They do not see where we got our knowledge; and, while they tramp on in their clumsy way, we wheel, and fly, and dart hither and thither, and seize with ready eye all the weak points, like Saladin in the desert. It is quite another thing when we come to write, and, without suggestion from another mind, to declare the positive amount of thought that is in us. Because we seemed to know all, they think we can tell all; and, finding we can tell so little, lose faith in their first opinion of us, *which, nathless, was true.*"

And again: "These gentlemen are surprised that I write no better, because I talk so well. But I have served a long apprenticeship to the one, none to the other. I shall write better, but

never, I think, so well as I talk; for then I feel inspired. The means are pleasant; my voice excites me, my pen never. I shall not be discouraged, nor take for final what they say, but sift from it the truth, and use it. I feel the strength to dispense with all illusions. I will stand steady, and rejoice in the severest probations."

"What a vulgarity there seems in this writing for the multitude! We know not yet, have not made ourselves known to a single soul, and shall we address those still more unknown? Shall we multiply our connexions, and thus make them still more superficial?

"I would go into the crowd, and meet men for the day, to help them for the day, but for that intercourse which most becomes us. Pericles, Anaxagoras, Aspasia, Cleone, is circle wide enough for me. I should think all the resources of my nature, and all the tribute it could enforce from external nature, none too much to furnish the banquet for this circle.

"But where to find fit, though few, representatives for all we value in humanity? Where obtain those golden keys to the secret treasure-chambers of the soul? No samples are perfect.

We must look abroad into the wide circle, to seek a little here, and a little there, to make up our company. And is not the 'prent book' a good beacon-light to tell where we wait the bark? —a reputation, the means of entering the Olympic game, where Pindar may perchance be encountered?

"So it seems the mind must reveal its secret; must reproduce. And I have no castle, and no natural circle, in which I might live, like the wise Makaria, observing my kindred the stars, and gradually enriching my archives. Makaria here must go abroad, or the stars would hide their light, and the archive remain a blank.

"For all the tides of life that flow within me, I am dumb and ineffectual, when it comes to casting my thought into a form. No old one suits me. If I could invent one, it seems to me the pleasure of creation would make it possible for me to write. What shall I do, dear friend? I want force to be either a genius or a character. One should be either private or public. I love best to be a woman; but womanhood is at present too straitly-bounded to give me scope. At hours, I live truly as a woman; at others, I should stifle; as, on the

other hand, I should palsy, when I would play the artist."

HEROISM.

These practical problems Margaret had to entertain and to solve the best way she could. She says truly, "there was none to take up her burden whilst she slept." But she was formed for action, and addressed herself quite simply to her part. She was a woman, an orphan, without beauty, without money; and these negatives will suggest what difficulties were to be surmounted where the tasks dictated by her talents required the good-will of 'good society,' in the town where she was to teach and write. But she was even-tempered and erect, and if her journals are sometimes mournful, her mind was made up, her countenance beamed courage and cheerfulness around her. Of personal influence, speaking strictly,—an efflux, that is, purely of mind and character, excluding all effects of power, wealth, fashion, beauty, or literary fame,—she had an extraordinary degree; I think more than any person I have known. An interview with her was a joyful event. Worthy men and women, who had conversed with her, could not forget her,

but worked bravely on in the remembrance that this heroic approver had recognised their aims. She spoke so earnestly, that the depth of the sentiment prevailed, and not the accidental expression, which might chance to be common. Thus I learned, the other day, that, in a copy of Mrs. Jameson's Italian Painters, against a passage describing Corregio as a true servant of God in his art, above sordid ambition, devoted to truth, "one of those superior beings of whom there are so few;" Margaret wrote on the margin, "And yet all might be such." The book lay long on the table of the owner, in Florence, and chanced to be read there by a young artist of much talent. "These words," said he, months afterwards, "struck out a new strength in me. They revived resolutions long fallen away, and made me set my face like a flint."

But Margaret's courage was thoroughly sweet in its temper. She accused herself in her youth of unamiable traits, but, in all the later years of her life, it is difficult to recal a moment of malevolence. The friends whom her strength of mind drew to her, her good heart held fast; and few persons were ever the objects of more persevering

kindness. Many hundreds of her letters remain, and they are alive with proofs of generous friendship given and received.

Among her early friends, Mrs. Farrar, of Cambridge, appears to have discovered, at a critical moment in her career, the extraordinary promise of the young girl, and some false social position into which her pride and petulance, and the mistakes of others, had combined to bring her, and she set herself, with equal kindness and address, to make a second home for Margaret in her own house, and to put her on the best footing in the agreeable society of Cambridge. She busied herself, also, as she could, in removing all superficial blemishes from the gem. In a well-chosen travelling party, made up by Mrs. Farrar, and which turned out to be the beginning of much happiness by the friendships then formed, Margaret visited, in the summer of 1835, Newport, New York, and Trenton Falls; and, in the autumn, made the acquaintance, at Mrs. F.'s house, of Miss Martineau, whose friendship, at that moment, was an important stimulus to her mind.

Mrs. Farrar performed for her, thenceforward, all the offices of an almost maternal friendship.

She admired her genius, and wished that all should admire it. She counselled and encouraged her, brought to her side the else unsuppliable aid of a matron and a lady, sheltered her in sickness, forwarded her plans with tenderness and constancy, to the last. I read all this in the tone of uniform gratitude and love with which this lady is mentioned in Margaret's letters. Friendships like this praise both parties; and the security with which people of a noble disposition approached Margaret, indicated the quality of her own infinite tenderness. A very intelligent woman applied to her what Stilling said of Goethe: "Her heart, which few knew, was as great as her mind, which all knew;" and added, that, "in character, Margaret was, of all she had beheld, the largest woman, and not a woman who wished to be a man." Another lady added, "She never disappointed you. To any one whose confidence she had once drawn out, she was thereafter faithful. She could talk of persons, and never gossip; for she had a fine instinct that kept her from any reality, and from any effect of treachery." I was still more struck with the remark that followed. "Her life, since she went abroad, is wholly

unknown to me; but I have an unshaken trust that what Margaret did she can defend."

She was a right brave and heroic woman. She shrunk from no duty, because of feeble nerves. Although, after her father died, the disappointment of not going to Europe with Miss Martineau and Mrs. Farrar was extreme, and her mother and sister wished her to take her portion of the estate and go; and, on her refusal, entreated the interference of friends to overcome her objections; Margaret would not hear of it, and devoted herself to the education of her brothers and sisters, and then to the making a home for the family. She was exact and punctual in money matters, and maintained herself, and made her full contribution to the support of her family, by the reward of her labours as a teacher, and in her conversation classes. I have a letter from her at Jamaica Plain, dated November, 1840, which begins,—

"This day I write you from my own hired house, and am full of the dignity of citizenship. Really, it is almost happiness. I retain, indeed, some cares and responsibilities; but these will sit light as feathers, for I can take my own time for

them. Can it be that this peace will be mine for five whole months? At any rate, five days have already been enjoyed."

Here is another, written in the same year:—

"I do not wish to talk to you of my ill-health, except that I like you should know when it makes me do anything badly, since I wish you to excuse and esteem me. But let me say, once for all, in reply to your letter, that you are mistaken if you think I ever wantonly sacrifice my health. I have learned that we cannot injure ourselves without injuring others; and besides, that we have no right; for ourselves are all we know of heaven. I do not try to domineer over myself. But, unless I were sure of dying, I cannot dispense with making some exertion, both for the present and the future. There is no mortal, who, if I laid down my burden, would take care of it while I slept. Do not think me weakly disinterested, or, indeed, disinterested at all."

Every one of her friends knew assuredly that her sympathy and aid would not fail them when required. She went, from the most joyful of all bridals, to attend a near relative during a

formidable surgical operation. She was here to help others. As one of her friends writes, "She helped whoever knew her." She adopted the interests of humble persons within her circle, with heart-cheering warmth; and her ardour in the cause of suffering and degraded women, at Sing-Sing, was as irresistible as her love of books. She had, many years afterwards, scope for the exercise of all her love and devotion, in Italy; but she came to it as if it had been her habit and her natural sphere. The friends who knew her in that country, relate, with much surprise, that she, who had all her life-time drawn people by her wit, should recommend herself so highly, in Italy, by her tenderness and large affection. Yet the tenderness was only a face of the wit; as before, the wit was raised above all other wit by the affection behind it. And, truly, there was an ocean of tears always, in her atmosphere, ready to fall.

There was at New York a poor adventurer, half patriot, half author, a miserable man, always in such depths of distress, with such squadrons of enemies, that no charity could relieve, and no intervention save him. He believed Europe banded for his destruction, and America corrupted to

connive at it. Margaret listened to these woes with such patience and mercy, that she drew five hundred dollars, which had been invested for her in a safe place, and put them in those hapless hands, where, of course, the money was only the prey of new rapacity, to be bewailed by new reproaches. When one of her friends had occasion to allude to this, long afterwards, she replied:—

"In answer to what you say of ——, I wish, indeed, the little effort I made for him had been wiselier applied. Yet these are not the things one regrets. It will not do to calculate too closely with the affectionate human impulse. We must consent to make many mistakes, or we should move too slow to help our brothers much. I am sure you do not regret what you spent on Miani, and other worthless people. As things looked then, it would have been wrong not to have risked the loss.'

TRUTH.

But Margaret crowned all her talents and virtues with a love of truth, and the power to speak it. In great and in small matters, she was a woman of her word, and gave those who con-

versed with her the unspeakable comfort that flows from plain dealing. Her nature was frank, and transparent, and she had a right to say, as she says in her journal:—

"I have the satisfaction of knowing, that, in my counsels, I have given myself no air of being better than I am."

And again:—

"In the chamber of death, I prayed in very early years, 'Give me truth; cheat me by no illusion.' O, the granting of this prayer is sometimes terrible to me! I walk over the burning ploughshares, and they sear my feet. Yet nothing but truth will do; no love will serve that is not eternal, and as large as the universe; no philanthropy in executing whose behests I myself become unhealthy; no creative genius which bursts asunder my life, to leave it a poor black chrysalid behind. And yet this last is too true of me."

She describes a visit made in May, 1844, at the house of some valued friends in West Roxbury, and adds: "We had a long and deep conversation, happy in its candour. Truth, truth, thou art the

great preservative! Let free air into the mind, and the pestilence cannot lurk in any corner."

And she uses the following language in an earnest letter to another friend:—

"My own entire sincerity, in every passage of life, gives me a right to expect that I shall be met by no unmeaning phrases or attentions."

"Reading to-day a few lines of ——, I thought with refreshment of such lives as T.'s, and V.'s, and W.'s, so private and so true, where each line written is really the record of a thought or a feeling. I hate poems which are a melancholy monument of culture for the sake of being cultivated, not of growing."

Even in trifles, one might find with her the advantage and the electricity of a little honesty. I have had from an eye-witness a note of a little scene that passed in Boston, at the Academy of Music. A party had gone early, and taken an excellent place to hear one of Beethoven's symphonies. Just behind them were soon seated a young lady and two gentlemen, who made an incessant buzzing, in spite of bitter looks cast on them by the whole neighbourhood, and destroyed

all the musical comfort. After all was over, Margaret leaned across one seat, and catching the eye of this girl, who was pretty and well-dressed, said, in her blandest, gentlest voice, "May I speak with you one moment?" "Certainly," said the young lady, with a fluttered, pleased look, bending forward. "I only wish to say," said Margaret, "that I trust, that, in the whole course of your life, you will not suffer so great a degree of annoyance as you have inflicted on a large party of lovers of music this evening." This was said with the sweetest air, as if to a little child; and it was as good as a play to see the change of countenance which the young lady exhibited, who had no replication to make to so Christian a blessing.

On graver occasions, the same habit was only more stimulated; and I cannot remember certain passages which called it into play, without new regrets at the costly loss which our community sustains in the loss of this brave and eloquent soul.

People do not speak the truth, not for the want of not knowing and preferring it, but because they have not the organ to speak it adequately. It requires a clear sight, and, still more, a high spirit, to deal with falsehood in the decisive way. I have

known several honest persons who valued truth as much as Peter and John; but, when they tried to speak it, *they* grew red and black in the face instead of Ananias, until, after a few attempts, they decided that aggressive truth was not their vocation, and confined themselves thenceforward to silent honesty, except on rare occasions, when either an extreme outrage or a happier inspiration loosened their tongue. But a soul is now and then incarnated, whom indulgent nature has not afflicted with any cramp or frost, but who can speak the right word at the right moment, qualify the selfish and hypocritical act with its real name, and, without any loss of serenity, hold up the offence to the purest daylight. Such a truth-speaker is worth more than the best police, and more than the laws or governors; for these do not always know their own side, but will back the crime for want of this very truth-speaker to expose them. That is the theory of the newspaper, —to supersede official by intellectual influence. But, though the apostles establish the journal, it usually happens that, by some strange oversight, Ananias slips into the editor's chair. If, then, we could be provided with a fair proportion

of truth-speakers, we could very materially and usefully contract the legislative and the executive functions. Still, the main sphere for this nobleness is private society, where so many mischiefs go unwhipped, being out of the cognisance of law, and supposed to be nobody's business. And society is, at all times, suffering for want of judges and headsmen, who will mark and lop these malefactors.

Margaret suffered no vice to insult her presence, but called the offender to instant account, when the law of right or of beauty was violated. She needed not, of course, to go out of her way to find the offender, and she never did; but she had the courage and the skill to cut heads off which were not worn with honour in her presence. Others might abet a crime by silence, if they pleased; she chose to clear herself of all complicity, by calling the act by its name.

It was curious to see the mysterious provocation which the mere presence of insight exerts in its neighbourhood. Like moths about a lamp, her victims voluntarily came to judgment: conscious persons, encumbered with egotism; vain persons, bent on concealing some mean vice; arrogant

reformers, with some halting of their own; the compromisers, who wished to reconcile right and wrong;—all came and held out their palms to the wise woman, to read their fortunes, and they were truly told. Many anecdotes have come to my ear, which show how useful the glare of her lamp proved in private circles, and what dramatic situations it created. But these cannot be told. The valour for dragging the accused spirits among his acquaintance to the stake is not in the heart of the present writer. The reader must be content to learn that she knew how, without loss of temper, to speak with unmistakeable plainness to any party, when she felt that the truth or the right was injured. For the same reason, I omit one or two letters, most honourable both to her mind and heart, in which she felt constrained to give the frankest utterance to her displeasure. Yet I incline to quote the testimony of one witness, which is so full and so pointed, that I must give it as I find it.

"I have known her, by the severity of her truth, mow down a crop of evil, like the angel of retribution itself, and could not sufficiently admire her courage. A conversation she had with

Mr. ——, just before he went to Europe, was one of these things; and there was not a particle of ill-will in it, but it was truth which she could not help seeing and uttering, nor he refuse to accept.

"My friends told me of a similar verdict, pronounced upon Mr. ——, at Paris, which they said was perfectly tremendous. They themselves sat breathless; Mr. —— was struck dumb; his eyes fixed on her with wonder and amazement, yet gazing too with an attention which seemed like fascination. When she had done, he still looked to see if she was to say more, and when he found she had really finished, he arose, took his hat, said faintly, "I thank you," and left the room. He afterwards said to Mr. ——, "I never shall speak ill of her. She has done me good." And this was the greater triumph, for this man had no theories of impersonality, and was the most egotistical and irritable of self-lovers, and was so unveracious, that one had to hope in charity that his organ for apprehending truth was deficient."

ECSTASY.

I have alluded to the fact, that, in the summer of 1840, Margaret underwent some change in the

tone and the direction of her thoughts, to which she attributed a high importance. I remember, at an earlier period, when in earnest conversation with her, she seemed to have that height and daring, that I saw she was ready to do whatever she thought; and I observed that, with her literary riches, her invention and wit, her boundless fun and drollery, her light satire, and the most entertaining conversation in America, consisted a certain pathos of sentiment, and a march of character, threatening to arrive presently at the shores and plunge into the sea of Buddhism and mystical trances. The literature of asceticism and rapturous piety was familiar to her. The conversation of certain mystics, who had appeared in Boston about this time, had interested her, but in no commanding degree. But in this year, 1840, in which events occurred which combined great happiness and pain for her affections, she remained for some time in a sort of ecstatic solitude. She made many attempts to describe her frame of mind to me, but did not inspire me with confidence that she had now come to any experiences that were profound or permanent. She was vexed at the want of sympathy on my part, and I again

felt that this craving for sympathy did not prove the inspiration. There was a certain restlessness and fever, which I did not like should deceive a soul which was capable of greatness. But jets of magnanimity were always natural to her; and her aspiring mind, eager for a higher and still a higher ground, made her gradually familiar with the range of the mystics, and, though never herself laid in the chamber called Peace, never quite authentically and originally speaking from the absolute or prophetic mount, yet she borrowed from her frequent visits to its precincts an occasional enthusiasm, which gave a religious dignity to her thought.

"I have plagues about me, but they don't touch me now. I thank nightly the benignant Spirit, for the unaccustomed serenity in which it enfolds me.

"—— is very wretched; and once I could not have helped taking on me all his griefs, and through him the griefs of his class; but now I drink only the wormwood of the minute, and that has always equal parts,—a drop of sweet to a drop of bitter. But I shall never be callous, never unable to

understand *home-sickness*. Am not I, too, one of the band who know not where to lay their heads? Am I wise enough to hear such things? Perhaps not; but happy enough, surely. For that Power which daily makes me understand the value of the little wheat amid the field of tares, and shows me how the kingdom of heaven is sown in the earth like a grain of mustard-seed, is good to me, and bids me call unhappiness happy."

TO ——.

"*March*, 1842.—My inward life has been more rich and deep, and of more calm and musical flow than ever before. It seems to me that Heaven, whose course has ever been to cross-bias me, as Herbert said, is no niggard in its compensations. I have indeed been forced to take up old burdens, from which I thought I had learned what they could teach; the pen has been snatched from my hand just as I most longed to use it; I have been forced to dissipate, when I most wished to concentrate; to feel the hourly presence of others' mental wants, when, it seemed, I was just on the point of satisfying my own. But a new

page is turned, and an era begun, from which I am not yet sufficiently remote to describe it as I would. I have lived a life, if only in the music I have heard, and one development seemed to follow another therein, as if bound together by destiny, and all things were done for me. All minds, all scenes, have ministered to me. Nature has seemed an ever-open secret; the Divine, a sheltering love; truth, an always-springing fountain; and my soul more alone, and less lonely, more hopeful, patient, and, above all, more gentle and humble in its living. New minds have come to reveal themselves to me, though I do not wish it, for I feel myself inadequate to the ties already formed. I have not strength or time to meet the thoughts of those I love already. But these new have come with gifts too fair to be refused, and which have cheered my passive mind."

"*June*, 1844.—Last night, in the boat, I could not help thinking, each has something, none has enough. I fear to want them all; and, through ages, if not for ever, promises and beckons the life of reception, of renunciation. Passing every seven days from one region to the other, the

maiden grows weary of *packing the trunk*, yet blesses Thee, O rich God!"

Her letters at this period betray pathetic alternation of feeling, between her aspiring for a rest in the absolute centre, and her necessity of a perfect sympathy with her friends. She writes to one of them:—

"What I want, the word I crave, I do not expect to hear from the lips of man. I do not wish to be, I do not wish to have, a *mediator;* yet I cannot help wishing, when I am with you, that some tones of the longed-for music could be vibrating in the air around us. But I will not be impatient again; for, though I am but as I am, I like not to feel the eyes I have loved averted."

CONVERSATION.

I have separated and distributed as I could some of the parts which blended in the rich composite energy which Margaret exerted during the ten years over which my occasional interviews with her were scattered. It remains to say, that all these powers and accomplishments found their best and only adequate channel in her conversa-

tion;—a conversation which those who have heard it, unanimously, as far as I know, pronounced to be, in elegance, in range, in flexibility, and adroit transition, in depth, in cordiality, and in moral aim, altogether admirable; surprising and cheerful as a poem, and communicating its own civility and elevation like a charm to all hearers. She was here, among our anxious citizens, and frivolous fashionists, as if sent to refine and polish her countrymen, and announce a better day. She poured a stream of amber over the endless store of private anecdotes, of bosom histories, which her wonderful persuasion drew forth, and transfigured them into fine fables. Whilst she embellished the moment, her conversation had the merit of being solid and true. She put her whole character into it, and had the power to inspire. The companion was made a thinker, and went away quite other than he came. The circle of friends who sat with her were not allowed to remain spectators or players, but she converted them into heroes, if she could. The muse woke the muses, and the day grew bright and eventful. Of course, there must be, in a person of such sincerity, much variety of aspect, according to the character of

her company. Only, in Margaret's case, there is almost an agreement in the testimony to an invariable power over the minds of all. I conversed lately with a gentleman who has vivid remembrances of his interviews with her in Boston, many years ago, who described her in these terms:—"No one ever came so near. Her mood applied itself to the mood of her companion, point to point, in the most limber, sinuous, vital way, and drew out the most extraordinary narratives; yet she had a light sort of laugh, when all was said, as if she thought she could live over that revelation. And this sufficient sympathy she had for all persons indifferently,—for lovers, for artists, and beautiful maids, and ambitious young statesmen, and for old aunts, and coach-travellers. Ah! she applied herself to the mood of her companion, as the sponge applies itself to water." The description tallies well enough with my observation. I remember she found, one day, at my house, her old friend Mr. ——, sitting with me. She looked at him attentively, and hardly seemed to know him. In the afternoon, he invited her to go with him to Cambridge. The next day she said to me, "You fancy that you know ——. It

is too absurd; you have never seen him. When I found him here, sitting like a statue, I was alarmed, and thought him ill. You sit with courteous, *un*confiding smile, and suppose him to be a mere man of talent. He is so with you. But the moment I was alone with him, he was another creature; his manner, so glassy and elaborate before, was full of soul, and the tones of his voice entirely different." And I have no doubt that she saw expressions, heard tones, and received thoughts from her companions, which no one else ever saw or heard from the same parties, and that her praise of her friends, which seemed exaggerated, was her exact impression. We were all obliged to recal Margaret's testimony, when we found we were sad blockheads to other people.

I find among her letters many proofs of this power of disposing equally the hardest and the most sensitive people to open their hearts, on very short acquaintance. Any casual rencontre, in a walk, in a steamboat, at a concert, became the prelude to unwonted confidences.

1843.—"I believe I told you about one new man, a Philistine, at Brook Farm. He reproved

me, as such people are wont, for my little faith. At the end of the first meeting in the hall, he seemed to me perfectly hampered in his old ways and technics, and I thought he would not open his mind to the views of others for years, if ever. After I wrote, we had a second meeting, by request, on personal relations; at the end of which he came to me and expressed delight, and a feeling of new light and life, in terms whose modesty might have done honour to the wisest."

"This afternoon we met Mr. —— in his wood; and he sat down and told us the story of his life, his courtship, and painted the portraits of his father and mother with most amusing naïveté. He says:—'How do you think I offered myself? I never had told Miss —— that I loved her; never told her she was handsome; and I went to her, and said, "Miss ——, I've come to offer myself; but first I'll give you my character. I'm very poor; you'll have to work: I'm very cross and irascible; you'll have everything to bear: and I've liked many other pretty girls. Now, what do you say?" and she said, "I'll have you:" and she's been everything to me.

"'My mother was a Calvinist, very strict, but

she was always reading "Abelard and Eloisa," and crying over it. At sixteen, I said to her,—"Mother, you've brought me up well; you've kept me strict. Why don't I feel that regeneration they talk of? why ain't I one of the elect?" And she talked to me about the potter using his clay as he pleased; and I said,—"Mother, God is not a potter; He's a perfect being; and He can't treat the vessels He makes anyhow, but with perfect justice, or he's no God. So I'm no Calvinist." '"

Here is a very different picture:—

"—— has infinite grace and shading in her character; a springing and tender fancy, a Madonna depth of meditative softness, and a purity which has been unstained, and keeps her dignified even in the most unfavourable circumstances. She was born for the love and ornament of life. I can scarcely forbear weeping sometimes, when I look on her, and think what happiness and beauty she might have conferred. She is as yet all unconscious of herself, and she rather dreads being with me, because I make her too conscious. She was on the point, at ——, of telling me all she

knew of herself; but I saw she dreaded, while she wished that I should give a local habitation and a name to what lay undefined, floating before her, the phantom of her destiny; or rather, lead her to give it, for she always approaches a tragical clearness when talking with me."

"—— has been to see us. But it serves not to know such a person, who perpetually defaces the high by such strange mingling with the low. It certainly is not pleasant to hear of God and Miss Biddeford in a breath. To me, this hasty attempt at skimming from the deeps of theosophy is as unpleasant as the rude vanity of reformers. Dear Beauty! where, where, amid these morasses and pine barrens, shall we make thee a temple? where find a Greek to guard it,—clear-eyed, deep-thoughted, and delicate enough to appreciate the relations and gradations which nature always observes?"

An acute and illuminated woman, who in this age of indifferentism, holds on with both hands to the creed of the Pilgrims, writes of Margaret, whom she saw but once:—"She looked very sensible, but as if contending with ill health and

duties. She lay, all the day and evening, on the sofa, and catechised me, who told my literal traditions, like any old bobbin-woman."

I add the testimony of a man of letters, and most competent observer, who had, for a long time, opportunities of daily intercourse with her:—

"When I knew Margaret, I was so young, and perhaps too much disposed to meet people on my own ground, that I may not be able to do justice to her. Her nature was so large aud receptive, so sympathetic with youth and genius, so aspiring, and withal so womanly in her understanding, that she made her companion think more of himself, and of a common life, than of herself. She was a companion as few others, if, indeed, any one, have been. Her heart was underneath her intellectualness, her mind was reverent, her spirit devout; a thinker without dryness; a scholar without pedantry. She could appreciate the finest thoughts, and knew the rich soil and large fields of beauty that made the little vase of otto. With her unusual wisdom and religious spirit, she seemed like the priestess of the youth, opening to him the fields of nature; but she was more than a

priestess, a companion also. As I recal her image, I think she may have been too intellectual, and too conscious of intellectual relation, so that she was not sufficiently self-centred on her own personality; and hence something of a duality: but I may not be correct in this impression."

CONVERSATIONS IN BOSTON.

BY R. W. EMERSON.

"Do not scold me; they are guests of my eyes. Do not frown, —they want no bread; they are guests of my words."

TARTAR ECLOGUES.

V.

CONVERSATIONS IN BOSTON.

In the year 1839, Margaret removed from Groton, and, with her mother and family, took a house at Jamaica Plain, five miles from Boston. In November of the next year the family removed to Cambridge, and rented a house there, near their old home. In 1841, Margaret took rooms for the winter in town, retaining still the house in Cambridge. And from the day of leaving Groton, until the Autumn of 1844, when she removed to New York, she resided in Boston, or its immediate vicinity. Boston was her social centre. There were the libraries, galleries, and concerts which she loved; there were her pupils and her friends; and there were her tasks, and the openings of a new career.

I have vaguely designated some of the friends with whom she was on terms of intimacy at the time when I was first acquainted with her. But the range of her talents required an equal compass

in her society; and she gradually added a multitude of names to the list. She knew already all the active minds at Cambridge; and has left a record of one good interview she had with Allston. She now became intimate with Doctor Channing, and interested him to that point in some of her studies, that, at his request, she undertook to render some selections of German philosophy into English for him. But I believe this attempt was soon abandoned. She found a valuable friend in the late Miss Mary Rotch, of New Bedford, a woman of great strength of mind, connected with the Quakers not less by temperament than by birth, and possessing the best lights of that once spiritual sect. At Newport, Margaret had made the acquaintance of an elegant scholar, in Mr. Calvert, of Maryland. In Providence she had won, as by conquest, such a homage of attachment, from young and old, that her arrival there, one day, on her return from a visit to Bristol, was a kind of ovation. In Boston, she knew people of every class,—merchants, politicians, scholars, artists, women, the migratory genius, and the rooted capitalist,—and, amongst all, many excellent people, who were every day passing, by new

opportunities, conversations, and kind offices, into the sacred circle of friends. The late Miss Susan Burley had many points of attraction for her, not only in her elegant studies, but also in the deep interest which that lady took in securing the highest culture for women. She was very well read, and, avoiding abstractions, knew how to help herself with examples and facts. A friendship that proved of great importance to the next years, was that established with Mr. George Ripley; an accurate scholar, a man of character, and of eminent powers of conversation, and already then deeply engaged in plans of an expansive practical bearing, of which the first fruit was the little community which flourished for a few years at Brook Farm. Margaret presently became connected with him in literary labours, and, as long as she remained in this vicinity, kept up her habits of intimacy with the colonists of Brook Farm. At West Roxbury, too, she knew and prized the heroic heart, the learning and wit of Theodore Parker, whose literary aid was, subsequently, of the first importance to her. She had an acquaintance for many years,—subject, no doubt, to alternations of sun and shade,—with

Mr. Alcott. There was much antagonism in their habitual views, but each learned to respect the genius of the other. She had more sympathy with Mr. Alcott's English friend, Charles Lane, an ingenious mystic, and bold experimenter in practical reforms, whose dexterity and temper in debate she frankly admired, whilst his asceticism engaged her reverence. Neither could some marked difference of temperament remove her from the beneficent influences of Miss Elizabeth Peabody, who, by her constitutional hospitality to excellence, whether mental or moral, has made her modest abode for so many years the inevitable resort of studious feet, and a private theatre for the exposition of every question of letters, of philosophy, of ethics, and of art.

The events in Margaret's life, up to the year 1840, were few, and not of that dramatic interest which readers love. Of the few events of her bright and blameless years, how many are private, and must remain so. In reciting the story of an affectionate and passionate woman, the voice lowers itself to a whisper, and becomes inaudible. A woman in our society finds her safety and happiness in exclusions and privacies. She congratu-

lates herself when she is not called to the market, to the courts, to the polls, to the stage, or to the orchestra. Only the most extraordinary genius can make the career of an artist secure and agreeable to her. Prescriptions almost invincible the female lecturer or professor of any science must encounter; and, except on points where the charities which are left to women as their legitimate province interpose against the ferocity of laws, with us a female politician is unknown. Perhaps this fact, which so dangerously narrows the career of a woman, accuses the tardiness of our civility, and many signs show that a revolution is already on foot.

Margaret had no love of notoriety, or taste for eccentricity, to goad her, and no weak fear of either. Willingly she was confined to the usual circles and methods of female talent. She had no false shame. Any task that called out her powers was good and desirable. She wished to live by her strength. She could converse, and teach, and write. She took private classes of pupils at her own house. She organized, with great success, a school for young ladies at Providence, and gave four hours a-day to it, during two years. She translated

Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe, and published in 1839. In 1841, she translated the Letters of Gunderode and Bettine, and published them as far as the sale warranted the work.

In 1843, she made a tour to Lake Superior and to Michigan, and published an agreeable narrative of it, called "Summer on the Lakes."

Apparently a more pretending, but really also a private and friendly service, she edited the "Dial," a quarterly journal, for two years from its first publication in 1840. She was eagerly solicited to undertake the charge of this work, which, when it began, concentrated a good deal of hope and affection. It had its origin in a club of speculative students, who found the air in America getting a little close and stagnant; and the agitation had, perhaps, the fault of being too secondary or bookish in its origin, or caught not from primary instincts, but from English, and still more from German books. The journal was commenced with much hope, and liberal promises of many coöperators. But the workmen of sufficient culture for a poetical and philosophical magazine were too few; and, as the pages were filled by unpaid contributors, each of whom had, according to the usage

and necessity of this country, some paying employment, the journal did not get his best work, but his second best. Its scattered writers had not digested their theories into a distinct dogma, still less into a practical measure which the public could grasp; and the magazine was so eclectic and miscellaneous, that each of its readers and writers valued only a small portion of it. For these reasons it never had a large circulation, and it was discontinued after four years. But the "Dial" betrayed, through all its juvenility, timidity, and conventional rubbish, some sparks of the true love and hope, and of the piety to spiritual law, which had moved its friends and founders, and it was received by its early subscribers with almost a religious welcome. Many years after it was brought to a close, Margaret was surprised in England by a very warm testimony to its merits; and, in 1848, the writer of these pages found it holding the same affectionate place in many a private bookshelf in England and Scotland, which it had secured at home. Good or bad, it cost a good deal of precious labour from those who served it, and from Margaret most of all. As editor, she received a compensation for the first years, which

was intended to be two hundred dollars *per annum*, but which, I fear, never reached even that amount.

But it made no difference to her exertion. She put so much heart into it, that she bravely undertook to open, in the Dial, the subjects which most attracted her; and she treated, in turn, Goethe and Beethoven, the Rhine and the Romaic Ballads, the Poems of John Sterling, and several pieces of sentiment, with a spirit which spared no labour; and when the hard conditions of Journalism held her to an inevitable day, she submitted to jeopardizing a long-cherished subject, by treating it in the crude and forced article for the month. I remember, after she had been compelled by ill health to relinquish the journal into my hands, my grateful wonder at the facility with which she assumed the preparation of laborious articles, that might have daunted the most practised scribe.

But in book or journal she found a very imperfect expression of herself, and it was the more vexatious, because she was accustomed to the clearest and fullest. When, therefore, she had to choose an employment that should pay money, she consulted her own genius, as well as the wishes of

a multitude of friends, in opening a class for conversation. In the autumn of 1839, she addressed the following letter, intended for circulation, to Mrs. George Ripley, in which her general design was stated:—

"My dear friend,—The advantages of a weekly meeting, for conversation, might be great enough to repay the trouble of attendance, if they consisted only in supplying a point of union to well-educated and thinking women, in a city which, with great pretensions to mental refinement, boasts, at present, nothing of the kind, and where I have heard many, of mature age, wish for some such means of stimulus and cheer, and those younger, for a place where they could state their doubts and difficulties, with a hope of gaining aid from the experience or aspirations of others. And, if my office were only to suggest topics, which would lead to conversation of a better order than is usual at social meetings, and to turn back the current when digressing into personalities or common-places, so that what is valuable in the experience of each might be brought to bear upon all, I should think the object not unworthy of the effort.

"But my ambition goes much further. It is to pass in review the departments of thought and knowledge, and endeavour to place them in due relation to one another in our minds. To systematize thought, and give a precision and clearness in which our sex are so deficient, chiefly, I think, because they have so few inducements to test and classify what they receive. To ascertain what pursuits are best suited to us, in our time and state of society, and how we may make best use of our means for building up the life of thought upon the life of action.

"Could a circle be assembled in earnest, desirous to answer the questions—What were we born to do? and how shall we do it?—which so few ever propose to themselves till their best years are gone by, I should think the undertaking a noble one; and if my resources should prove sufficient to make me its moving spring, I should be willing to give to it a large portion of those coming years, which will, as I hope, be my best. I look upon it with no blind enthusiasm, nor unlimited faith, but with a confidence that I have attained a distinct perception of means, which, if there are persons competent to direct them, can supply a

great want, and promote really high objects. So far as I have tried them yet, they have met with success so much beyond my hopes, that my faith will not easily be shaken, nor my earnestness chilled. Should I, however, be disappointed in Boston, I could hardly hope that such a plan could be brought to bear on general society, in any other city of the United States. But I do not fear, if a good beginning can be made. I am confident that twenty persons cannot be brought together from better motives than vanity or pedantry, to talk upon such subjects as we propose, without finding in themselves great deficiencies, which they will be very desirous to supply.

"Should the enterprise fail, it will be either from incompetence in me, or that sort of vanity in them which wears the garb of modesty. On the first of these points, I need not speak. I cannot be supposed to have felt so much the wants of others, without feeling my own still more deeply. And, from the depth of this feeling, and the earnestness it gave, such power as I have yet exerted has come. Of course, those who are inclined to meet me, feel a confidence in me, and should they be disappointed, I shall regret it not solely or

most on my own account. I have not given my gauge without measuring my capacity to sustain defeat. For the other, I know it is very hard to lay aside the shelter of vague generalities, the art of coterie criticism, and the 'delicate disdains' of *good society*, and fearlessly meet the light, even though it flow from the sun of truth. Yet, as, without such generous courage, nothing of value can be learned or done, I hope to see many capable of it; willing that others should think their sayings crude, shallow, or tasteless, if, by such unpleasant means, they may attain real health and vigour, which need no aid from rouge or candlelight, to brave the light of the world.

"Since I saw you, I have been told of persons who are desirous to join the class, 'if only they need not talk.' I am so sure that the success of the whole depends on conversation being general, that I do not wish any one to come, who does not intend, if possible, to take an active part. No one will be forced, but those who do not talk will not derive the same advantages with those who openly state their impressions, and can consent to have it known that they learn by blundering, as is the destiny of man here below. And general silence,

or side talks, would paralyse me. I should feel coarse and misplaced, were I to harangue overmuch. In former instances, I have been able to make it easy and even pleasant, to twenty-five out of thirty, to bear their part, to question, to define, to state, and examine opinions. If I could not do as much now, I should consider myself as unsuccessful, and should withdraw. But I shall expect communication to be effected by degrees, and to do a great deal myself at the first meetings. My method has been to open a subject,—for instance, Poetry, as expressed in—

" External Nature;

" The life of man;

" Literature;

" The fine arts;

" or, The history of a nation to be studied in —

" Its religious and civil institutions;

" Its literature and arts;

" The characters of its great men;

and, after as good a general statement as I know how to make, select a branch of the subject, and lead others to give their thoughts upon it. When they have not been successful in verbal utterance of their thoughts, I have asked them to attempt it

in writing. At the next meeting, I would read these 'skarts of pen and ink' aloud, and canvass their adequacy, without mentioning the names of the writers. I found this less necessary, as I proceeded, and my companions attained greater command both of thought and language; but for a time it was useful, and may be now. Great advantage in point of discipline may be derived from even this limited use of the pen.

"I do not wish, at present, to pledge myself to any course of subjects. Generally, I may say, they will be such as literature and the arts present in endless profusion. Should a class be brought together, I should wish, first, to ascertain our common ground, and, in the course of a few meetings, should see whether it be practicable to follow out the design in my mind, which, as yet, would look too grand on paper.

"Let us see whether there will be any organ, before noting down the music to which it may give breath."

Accordingly a class of ladies assembled at Miss Peabody's rooms, in West Street, on the 6th November, 1839. Twenty-five were present, and

the circle comprised some of the most agreeable and intelligent women to be found in Boston and its neighbourhood. The following brief report of this first day's meeting remains:—

"Miss Fuller enlarged, in her introductory conversation, on the topics which she touched in her letter to Mrs. Ripley.

"Women are now taught, at school, all that men are; they run over, superficially, even *more* studies, without being really taught anything. When they come to the business of life, they find themselves inferior, and all their studies have not given them that practical good sense, and mother wisdom, and wit, which grew up with our grandmothers at the spinning-wheel. But, with this difference; men are called on, from a very early period, to reproduce all that they learn. Their college exercises, their political duties, their professional studies, the first actions of life in any direction, call on them to put to use what they have learned. But women learn without any attempt to reproduce. Their only reproduction is for purposes of display.

"It is to supply this defect," Miss Fuller said,

"that these conversations have been planned. She was not here to teach; but she had had some experience in the management of such a conversation as was now proposed; she meant to give her view on each subject, and provoke the thoughts of others.

"It would be best to take subjects on which we know words, and have vague impressions, and compel ourselves to define those words. We should have, probably, mortifications to suffer; but we should be encouraged by the rapid gain that comes from making a simple and earnest effort for expression."

Miss Fuller had proposed the Grecian Mythology as the subject of the first conversations, and now gave her reasons for the choice. "It is quite separated from all exciting local subjects. It is serious, without being solemn, and without excluding any mode of intellectual action; it is playful, as well as deep. It is sufficiently wide, for it is a complete expression of the cultivation of a nation. It is objective and tangible. It is, also, generally known, and associated with all our ideas of the arts.

"It originated in the eye of the Greek. He lived out of doors: his climate was genial, his

senses were adapted to it. He was vivacious and intellectual, and personified all he beheld. He *saw* the oreads, naiads, nereids. Their forms, as poets and painters give them, are the very lines of nature humanized, as the child's eye sees faces in the embers or in the clouds.

"Other forms of the mythology, as Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, are great instincts, or ideas, or facts of the internal constitution, separated and personified."

After exhibiting their enviable mental health, and rebutting the cavils of some of the speakers, —who could not bear, in Christian times, by Christian ladies, that heathen Greeks should be envied,—Miss Fuller declared, "that she had no desire to go back, and believed we have the elements of a deeper civilization; yet, the Christian was in its infancy; the Greek in its maturity; nor could she look on the expression of a great nation's intellect, as insignificant. These fables of the Gods were the result of the universal sentiments of religion, aspiration, intellectual action, of a people, whose political and æsthetic life had become immortal; and we must leave off despising, if we would begin to learn."

The reporter closes her account by saying:—"Miss Fuller's thoughts were much illustrated, and all was said with the most captivating address and grace, and with beautiful modesty. The position in which she placed herself with respect to the rest, was entirely ladylike, and companionable. She told what she intended, the earnest purpose with which she came, and, with great tact, indicated the indiscretions that might spoil the meeting."

Here is Margaret's own account of the first days.

TO R. W. E.

"*25th Nov.* 1839.—My class is prosperous. I was so fortunate as to rouse, at once, the tone of simple earnestness, which can scarcely, when once awakened, cease to vibrate. All seem in a glow, and quite as receptive as I wish. They question and examine, yet follow leadings; and thoughts, not opinions, have ruled the hour every time. There are about twenty-five members, and every one, I believe, full of interest. The first time, ten took part in the conversation; the last, still more. Mrs. ——— came out in a way that surprised me. She seems to have shaken off a

wonderful number of films. She showed pure vision, sweet sincerity, and much talent. Mrs. ——— keeps us in good order, and takes care that Christianity and morality are not forgotten. The first day's topic was, the genealogy of heaven and earth; then the Will, (Jupiter;) the Understanding, (Mercury): the second day's, the celestial inspiration of genius, perception and transmission of divine law, (Apollo;) the terrene inspiration, the impassioned abandonment of genius, (Bacchus.) Of the thunderbolt, the caduceus, the ray, and the grape, having disposed as well as might be, we came to the wave, and the sea-shell it moulds to Beauty, and Love her parent and her child.

"I assure you, there is more Greek than Bostonian spoken at the meetings; and we may have pure honey of Hymettus to give you yet."

To another friend she wrote:—

"The circle I meet interests me. So even devoutly thoughtful seems their spirit, that, from the very first, I took my proper place, and never had the feeling I dreaded, of display, of a paid Corinne. I feel as I would, truly a teacher and a

guide. All are intelligent; five or six have talent. But I am never driven home for ammunition; never put to any expense; never truly called out. What I have is always enough; though I feel how superficially I am treating my subject."

Here is an extract from the letter of a lady, who joined the class, for the first time, at the eighth meeting, to her friend in New Haven:—

"Christmas made a holiday for Miss Fuller's class, but it met on Saturday, at noon. As I sat there, my heart overflowed with joy at the sight of the bright circle, and I longed to have you by my side, for I know not where to look for so much character, culture, and so much love of truth and beauty, in any other circle of women and girls. The names and faces would not mean so much to you as to me, who have seen more of the lives, of which they are the sign. Margaret, beautifully dressed, (don't despise that, for it made a fine picture,) presided with more dignity and grace than I had thought possible. The subject was Beauty. Each had written her definition, and Margaret began with reading her own. This called forth questions, comments, and illustrations,

on all sides. The style and manner, of course, in this age, are different, but the question, the high point from which it was considered, and the earnestness and simplicity of the discussion, as well as the gifts and graces of the speakers, gave it the charm of a Platonic dialogue. There was no pretension or pedantry in a word that was said. The tone of remark and question was simple as that of children in a school class; and, I believe, every one was gratified."

The conversations thus opened proceeded with spirit and success. Under the mythological forms, room was found for opening all the great questions on which Margaret and her friends wished to converse. Prometheus was made the type of Pure Reason; Jupiter, of Will; Juno, the passive side of the same, or Obstinacy; Minerva, Intellectual Power, Practical Reason; Mercury, Executive Power, Understanding; Apollo was Genius, the Sun; Bacchus was Geniality, the Earth's answer. "Apollo and Bacchus were contrasted," says the reporter. "Margaret unfolded her idea of Bacchus. His whole life was triumph. Born from fire; a divine frenzy: the answer of the earth

to the sun,—of the warmth of joy to the light of genius. He is beautiful, also; not severe in youthful beauty, like Apollo; but exuberant,—liable to excess. She spoke of the fables of his destroying Pentheus, &c., and suggested the interpretations. This Bacchus was found in Scripture. The Indian Bacchus is glowing; he is the genial apprehensive power; the glow of existence; mere joy."

Venus was Grecian womanhood, instinctive; Diana, chastity; Mars, Grecian manhood, instinctive. Venus made the name for a conversation on Beauty, which was extended through four meetings, as it brought in irresistibly the related topics of poetry, genius, and taste. Neptune was Circumstance; Pluto, the Abyss, the Undeveloped; Pan, the glow and sportiveness and music of Nature; Ceres, the productive Power of Nature; Proserpine, the Phenomenon.

Under the head of Venus, in the fifth conversation, the story of Cupid and Psyche was told with fitting beauty, by Margaret; and many fine conjectural interpretations suggested from all parts of the room. The ninth conversation turned on the distinctive qualities of poetry, discriminating

it from the other fine arts. Rhythm and Imagery, it was agreed, were distinctive. An episode to dancing, which the conversation took, led Miss Fuller to give the thought that lies at the bottom of different dances. Of her lively description the following record is preserved:—

"Gavottes, shawl dances, and all of that kind, are intended merely to exhibit the figure in as many attitudes as possible. They have no character, and say nothing, except, 'Look! how graceful I am!'

"The minuet is conjugal; but the wedlock is chivalric. Even so would Amadis wind slow, stately, calm, through the mazes of life, with Oriana, when he had made obeisances enough to win her for a partner.

"English, German, Swiss, French, and Spanish dances all express the same things, though in very different ways. Love and its life are still the theme.

"In the English country dance, the pair who have chosen one another, submit decorously to the restraints of courtship and frequent separations, cross hands, four go round, down outside, in the

most earnest, lively, complacent fashion. If they join hands to go down the middle, and exhibit their union to all spectators, they part almost as soon as meet, and disdain not to give hands right and left to the most indifferent persons, like marriage in its daily routine.

"In the Swiss, the man pursues, stamping with energy, marking the time by exulting flings, or snapping of the fingers, in delighted confidence of succeeding at last; but the maiden, coyly, demurely, foots it round, yet never gets out of the way, intending to be won.

"The German asks his *madchen* if she will, with him, for an hour forget the cares and commonplaces of life in a tumult of rapturous sympathy, and she smiles with Saxon modesty her *Ja*. He sustains her in his arms; the music begins. At first, in willing mazes, they calmly imitate the planetary orbs; but the melodies flow quicker, their accordant hearts beat higher, and they whirl at last into giddy raptures, and dizzy evolutions, which steal from life its free-will and self-collection, till nothing is left but mere sensation.

"The French couple are somewhat engaged with one another, but almost equally so with the

world around them. They think it well to vary existence with plenty of coquetry and display. First, the graceful reverence to one another, then to their neighbours. Exhibit your grace in the *chassé*,—made apparently solely for the purpose of *déchasséing*, then civil intimacy between the ladies, in *la chaine*, then a decorous promenade of partners, then right and left with all the world, and balance, &c. The quadrille also offers opportunity for talk. Looks and sympathetic motions are not enough for our Parisian friends, unless eked out by words.

"The impassioned bolero and fandango are the dances for me. They are not merely loving, but living; they express the sweet Southern ecstasy at the mere gift of existence. These persons are together, they live, they are beautiful; how can they say this in sufficiently plain terms?—I love, I live, I am beautiful!—I put on my festal dress to do honour to my happiness; I shake my castanets that my hands, too, may be busy; I *felice—felicissima!*"

This first series of conversations extended to thirteen, the class meeting once a-week at noon,

and remaining together for two hours. The class were happy, and the interest increased. A new series of thirteen more weeks followed, and the general subject of the new course was "The Fine Arts." A few fragmentary notes only of these hours have been shown me, but all those who bore any part in them testify to their entire success. A very competent witness has given me some interesting particulars:—

"Margaret used to come to the conversations very well dressed, and, altogether, looked sumptuously. She began them with an exordium, in which she gave her leading views; and those exordiums were excellent, from the elevation of the tone, the ease and flow of discourse, and from the tact with which they were kept aloof from any excess, and from the gracefulness with which they were brought down, at last, to a possible level for others to follow. She made a pause, and invited the others to come in. Of course, it was not easy for every one to venture her remark, after an eloquent discourse, and in the presence of twenty superior women, who were all inspired. But whatever was said, Margaret knew how to seize

the good meaning of it with hospitality, and to make the speaker feel glad, and not sorry, that she had spoken. She showed herself thereby fit to preside at such meetings, and imparted to the susceptible a wonderful reliance on her genius."

In her writings she was prone to spin her sentences without a sure guidance, and beyond the sympathy of her reader. But in discourse, she was quick, conscious of power, in perfect tune with her company, and would pause, and turn the stream with grace and adroitness, and with so much spirit, that her face beamed, and the young people came away delighted, among other things, with "her beautiful looks." When she was intellectually excited, or in high animal spirits, as often happened, all deformity of features was dissolved in the power of the expression. So I interpret this repeated story of sumptuousness of dress, that this appearance, like her reported beauty, was simply an effect of a general impression of magnificence made by her genius, and mistakenly attributed to some external elegance; for I have been told, by her most intimate friend, who knew

every particular of her conduct at that time, that there was nothing of special expense or splendour in her toilette.

The effect of the winter's work was happiest. Margaret was made intimately known to many excellent persons.* In this company of matrons and maids, many tender spirits had been set in ferment. A new day had dawned for them; new thoughts had opened; the secret of life was shown, or, at least, that life had a secret. They could not forget what they had heard, and what they had been surprised into saying. A true refinement had begun to work in many who had been slaves to trifles. They went home thoughtful and

* A friend has furnished me with the names of so many of the ladies as she recollects to have met, at one or another time, at these classes. Some of them were perhaps only occasional members. The list recals how much talent, beauty, and worth were at that time constellated here:—Mrs. George Bancroft, Mrs. Barlow, Miss Burley, Mrs. L. M. Child, Miss Mary Channing, Miss Sarah Clarke, Mrs. E. P. Clark, Miss Dorr, Mrs. Edwards, Mrs. R. W. Emerson, Mrs. Farrar, Miss S. J. Gardiner, Mrs. R. W. Hooper, Mrs. S. Hooper, Miss Haliburton, Miss Howes, Miss E. Hoar, Miss Marianne Jackson, Mrs. T. Lee, Miss Littlehale, Mrs. E. G. Loring, Mrs. Mack, Mrs. Horace Mann, Mrs. Newcomb, Mrs. Theodore Parker, Miss E. P. Peabody, Miss S. Peabody, Mrs. S. Putnam, Mrs. Phillips, Mrs. Josiah Quincy, Miss B. Randall, Mrs. Samuel Ripley, Mrs. George Ripley, Mrs. George Russell, Miss Ida Russell, Mrs. Frank Shaw, Miss Anna B. Shaw, Miss Caroline Sturgis, Miss Tuckerman, Miss Maria White, Mrs. S. G. Ward, Miss Mary Ward, Mrs. W. Whiting.

happy, since the steady elevation of Margaret's aim had infused a certain unexpected greatness of tone into the conversation. It was, I believe, only an expression of the feeling of the class, the remark made, perhaps at the next year's course, by a lady of eminent powers, previously by no means partial to Margaret, and who expressed her frank admiration on leaving the house :—" I never heard, read of, or imagined a conversation at all equal to this we have now heard."

The strongest wishes were expressed, on all sides, that the conversations should be renewed at the beginning of the following winter. Margaret willingly consented ; but, as I have already intimated, in the summer and autumn of 1840, she had retreated to some interior shrine, and believed that she came into life and society with some advantage from this devotion.

Of this feeling the new discussion bore evident traces. Most of the last year's class returned, and new members gave in their names. The first meeting was holden on the 22d of November, 1840. By all accounts it was the best of all her days. I have again the notes, taken at the time,

of the excellent lady at whose house it was held, to furnish the following sketch of the first and the following meetings. I preface these notes by an extract from a letter of Margaret.

TO W. H. C.

"*Sunday, Nov. 8th,* 1840.—On Wednesday I opened with my class. It was a noble meeting. I told them the great changes in my mind, and that I could not be sure they would be satisfied with me now, as they were when I was in deliberate possession of myself. I tried to convey the truth, and though I did not arrive at any full expression of it, they all, with glistening eyes, seemed melted into one love. Our relation is now perfectly true, and I do not think they will ever interrupt me. —— sat beside me, all glowing; and the moment I had finished, she began to speak. She told me afterwards, she was all kindled, and none there could be strangers to her more. I was really delighted by the enthusiasm of Mrs. ——. I did not expect it. All her best self seemed called up, and she feels that these meetings will be her highest pleasure. ——, too, was most beautiful. I went

home with Mrs. F., and had a long attack of nervous headache. She attended anxiously on me, and asked if it would be so all winter. I said if it were I did not care; and truly I feel just now such a separation from pain and illness,—such a consciousness of true life, while suffering most, —that pain has no effect but to steal some of my time."

CONVERSATIONS ON THE FINE ARTS.

"Miss Fuller's fifth conversation was pretty much a monologue of her own. The company collected proved much larger than any of us had anticipated: a chosen company,—several persons from homes out of town, at considerable inconvenience; and, in one or two instances, fresh from extreme experiences of joy and grief,—which Margaret felt a very grateful tribute to her. She knew no one came for experiment, but all in earnest love and trust, and was moved by it quite to the heart, which threw an indescribable charm of softness over her brilliancy. It is sometimes said, that women never are so lovely and enchanting in the company of their own sex, merely, but it requires the other to draw them out. Certain

it is that Margaret never appears, when I see her, either so brilliant and deep in thought, or so desirous to please, or so modest, or so heart-touching, as in this very party. Well, she began to say how gratifying it was to her to see so many come, because all knew why they came,—that it was to learn from each other and ourselves the highest ends of life, where there could be no excitements and gratifications of personal ambition, &c. She spoke of herself, and said she felt she had undergone changes in her own mind since the last winter, as doubtless we all felt we had done; that she was conscious of looking at all things less objectively,—more from the law with which she identified herself. This, she stated, was the natural progress of our individual being, when we did not hinder its development, to advance from objects to law, from the circumference of being, where we found ourselves at our birth, to the centre.

"This advance was enacted poesy. We could not, in our individual lives, amid the disturbing influences of other wills, which had as much right to their own action as we to ours, enact poetry entirely; the discordant, the inferior, the prose, would intrude, but we should always keep in

mind that poetry of life was not something aside, —a path that might or might not be trod,—it was the only path of the true soul; and prose you may call the deviation. We might not always be poetic in life, but we might and should be poetic in our thought and intention. The fine arts were one compensation for the necessary prose of life. The man who could not write his thought of beauty in his life,—the materials of whose life would not work up into poetry,—wrote it in stone, drew it on canvass, breathed it in music, or built it in lofty rhyme. In this statement, however, she guarded her meaning, and said that to seek beauty was to miss it often. We should only seek to live as harmoniously with the great laws as our social and other duties permitted, and solace ourselves with poetry and the fine arts."

I find a further record by the same friendly scribe, which seems a second and enlarged account of the introductory conversation, or else a sketch of the course of thought which ran through several meetings, and which very naturally repeated occasionally the same thoughts. I give it as I find it:—

"She then recurred to the last year's conversations; and, first, the Grecian mythologies, which she looked at as symbolical of a deeper intellectual and æsthetic life than we were wont to esteem it, when looking at it from a narrow religious point of view. We had merely skimmed along the deeper study. She spoke of the conversations on the different part played by Inspiration and Will in the works of man, and stated the different views of Inspiration,—how some had felt it was merely perception; others apprehended it as influx upon the soul from the soul-side of its being. Then she spoke of the conversation upon poesy as the ground of all the fine arts, and also of the true art of life; it being not merely truth, not merely good, but the beauty which integrates both. On this poesy she dwelt long, aiming to show how life,—perfect life,—could be the only perfect manifestation of it. Then she spoke of the individual as surrounded, however, by *prose*, —so we may here call the manifestation of the temporary, in opposition to the eternal, always trenching on it, and circumscribing and darkening. She spoke of the acceptance of this limitation, but it should be called by the right name,

and always measured; and we should inwardly cling to the truth that poesy was the natural life of the soul; and never yield inwardly to the common notion that poesy was a luxury, out of the common track; but maintain in word and life that prose carried the soul out of its track; and then, perhaps it would not injure us to walk in these by-paths, when forced thither. She admitted that prose was the necessary human condition, and quickened our life indirectly by necessitating a conscious demand on the source of life. In reply to a remark I made, she very strongly stated the difference between a poetic and a *dilettante* life, and sympathised with the sensible people who were tired of hearing all the young ladies of Boston sighing like furnace after being beautiful. Beauty was something very different from prettiness, and a microscopic vision missed the grand whole. The fine arts were our compensation for not being able to live out our poesy, amid the conflicting and disturbing forces of this moral world in which we are. In sculpture, the heights to which our being comes are represented; and its nature is such as to allow us to leave out all that vulgarises,—all that bridges over to the actual

from the ideal. She dwelt long upon sculpture, which seems her favourite art. That was grand, when a man first thought to engrave his idea of man upon a stone, the most unyielding and material of materials,—the backbone of this phenomenal earth, — and, when he did not succeed, that he persevered, and so, at last, by repeated efforts, the Apollo came to be.

"But, no; music she thought the greatest of arts,—expressing what was most interior,—what was too fine to be put into any material grosser than air: conveying from soul to soul the most secret motions of feeling and thought. This was the only fine art which might be thought to be flourishing now. The others had had their day. This was advancing upon a higher intellectual ground.

"Of painting she spoke, but not so well. She seemed to think painting worked more by illusion than sculpture. It involved more prose, from its representing more objects. She said nothing adequate about *colour*.

"She dwelt upon the histrionic art as the most complete, its organ being the most flexible and powerful.

"She then spoke of life as the art, of which these all were beautiful symbols; and said in recurring to her opinions expressed last winter, of Dante and Wordsworth, that she had taken another view, deeper, and more in accordance with some others which were then expressed. She acknowledged that Wordsworth had done more to make all men poetical, than perhaps any other; that he was the poet of reflection; that where he failed to poetise his subject, his simple faith intimated to the reader a poetry that he did not find in the book. She admitted that Dante's Narrative was instinct with the poetry concentrated often in single words. She uttered her old heresies about Milton, however, unmodified.

"I do not remember the transition to modern poetry and Milnes; but she read (very badly indeed) the Legendary Tale.

"We then had three conversations upon Sculpture, one of which was taken up very much in historical accounts of the sculpture of the ancients, in which colour was added to form, and which seemed to prove that they were not, after all, sufficiently intellectual to be operated on by form exclusively. The question, of course, arose

whether there was a modern sculpture, and why not. This led us to speak of the Greek sculpture as growing naturally out of their life and religion, and how alien it was to our life and to our religion. The Swiss lion, carved by Thorwaldsen out of the side of a mountain rock, was described as a natural growth. Those who had seen it described it; and Mrs. —— spoke of it. She was also led to the story of her acquaintance with Thorwaldsen, and drew tears from many eyes with her natural eloquence.

" Mrs. C. asked, if sculpture could express as well as painting the idea of immortality.

" Margaret thought the Greek art expressed immortality as much as Christian art, but did not throw it into the future, by preeminence. They expressed it in the present, by casting out of the mortal body every expression of infirmity and decay. The idealization of the human form makes a God. The fact that man can conceive and express this perfection of being, is as good a witness to immortality, as the look of aspiration in the countenance of a Magdalen.

" It is quite beyond the power of my memory to recal all the bright utterances of Margaret, in

these conversations on Sculpture. It was a favourite subject with her. Then came two or three conversations on Painting, in which it seemed to be conceded that colour expressed passion, whilst sculpture more severely expressed thought: yet painting did not exclude the expression of thought, or sculpture that of feeling,—witness Niobe,—but it must be an universal feeling, like the maternal sentiment.

" *March* 22, 1841.—The question of the day was, What is life?

" Let us define, each in turn, our idea of living. Margaret did not believe we had, any of us, a distinct idea of life.

" A. S. thought so great a question ought to be given for a written definition. ' No,' said Margaret, ' that is of no use. When we go away to think of anything, we never do think. We all talk of life. We all have some thought now. Let us tell it. C——, what is life?'

" C—— replied, —' It is to laugh, or cry, according to our organization.'

" ' Good,' said Margaret, ' but not grave enough. Come, what is life? I know what I think; I want you to find out what you think.'

" Miss P. replied,—' Life is division from one's principle of life in order to a conscious reorganization. We are cut up by time and circumstance, in order to feel our reproduction of the eternal law.'

" Mrs. E.,—' We live by the will of God, and the object of life is to submit,' and went on into Calvinism.

" Then came up all the antagonisms of Fate and Freedom.

" Mrs. H. said,—' God created us in order to have a perfect sympathy from us as free beings.'

" Mrs. A. B. said she thought the object of life was to attain absolute freedom. At this Margaret immediately and visibly kindled.

" C. S. said,— ' God creates from the fulness of life, and cannot but create; he created us to overflow, without being exhausted, because what he created, necessitated new creation. It is not to make us happy, but creation is his happiness and ours.'

" Margaret was then pressed to say what she considered life to be.

" Her answer was so full, clear, and concise, at once, that it cannot but be marred by being drawn

through the scattering medium of my memory. But here are some fragments of her satisfying statement.

" She began with God as Spirit, Life, so full as to create and love eternally, yet capable of pause. Love and creativeness are dynamic forces, out of which we, individually, as creatures, go forth bearing his image, that is, having within our being the same dynamic forces, by which we also add constantly to the total sum of existence, and shaking off ignorance, and its effects, and by becoming more ourselves, *i. e.* more divine ;—destroying sin in its principle, we attain to absolute freedom, we return to God, conscious like himself, and, as his friends, giving, as well as receiving, felicity for evermore. In short, we become gods, and able to give the life which we now feel ourselves able only to receive.

" On Saturday morning, Mrs. L. E. and Mrs. E. H. were present, and begged Margaret to repeat the statement concerning life, with which she closed the last conversation. Margaret said she had forgotten every word she said. She must have been inspired by a good genius, to have so satisfied everybody,—but the good genius had

left her. She would try, however, to say what she thought, and trusted it would resemble what she had said already. She then went into the matter, and, true enough, she did not use a single word she used before."

The fame of these conversations spread wide through all families and social circles of the ladies attending, and the golden report they gave, led to a proposal, that Margaret should undertake an evening class, of four or five lessons, to which gentlemen should also be admitted. This was put in effect, in the course of the winter, and I had myself the pleasure of assisting at one—the second —of these soirées. The subject was Mythology, and several gentlemen took part in it. Margaret spoke well,— she could not otherwise, — but I remember that she seemed encumbered, or interrupted, by the headiness or incapacity of the men, whom she had not had the advantage of training, and who fancied, no doubt, that, on such a question, they, too, must assert and dogmatize.

But, how well or ill they fared, may still be known; since the same true hand which reported for the Ladies' Class, drew up, at the time, the

following note of the Evenings of Mythology. My distance from town, and engagements, prevented me from attending again. I was told that on the preceding and following evenings the success was more decisive.

"Margaret's plan, in these conversations, was a very noble one, and, had it been seconded, as she expected, they would have been splendid. She thought, that, by admitting gentlemen, who had access, by their classical education, to the whole historical part of the mythology, her own comparative deficiency, as she felt it, in this part of learning, would be made up; and that taking her stand on the works of art, which were the final development in Greece of these multifarious fables, the whole subject might be swept from zenith to nadir. But all that depended on others entirely failed. Mr. W. contributed some isolated facts,—told the etymology of names, and cited a few fables not so commonly known as most; but, even in the point of erudition, which Margaret did not profess, on the subject, she proved the best informed of the party, while no one brought an idea, except herself.

"Her general idea was, that, upon the Earth-

worship and Sabæanism of earlier ages, the Grecian genius acted to humanize and idealize, but, still, with some regard to the original principle. What was a seed, or a root, merely, in the Egyptian mind, became a flower in Greece,—Isis, and Osiris, for instance, are reproduced in Ceres and Proserpine, with some loss of generality, but with great gain of beauty; Hermes, in Mercury, with only more grace of form, though with great loss of grandeur; but the loss of grandeur was also an advance in philosophy, in this instance, the brain in the hand being the natural consequence of the application of idea to practice,—the Hermes of the Egyptians.

"I do not feel that the class, by their apprehension of Margaret, do any justice to the scope and depth of her views. They come,—myself among the number,—I confess,—to be entertained; but she has a higher purpose. She, amid all her infirmities, studies and thinks with the seriousness of one upon oath, and there has not been a single conversation this winter, in either class, that had not in it the spirit which giveth life. Just in proportion to the importance of the subject, does she tax her mind, and say what is

most important; while, of necessity, nothing is reported from the conversations but her brilliant sallies, her occasional paradoxes of form, and, sometimes, her impatient reacting upon dulness and frivolity. In particular points, I know, some excel her; in particular departments I sympathise more with some other persons; but take her as a whole, she has the most to bestow on others by conversation of any person I have ever known. I cannot conceive of any species of vanity living in her presence. She distances all who talk with her.

"Mr. E. only served to display her powers. With his sturdy reiteration of his uncompromising idealism, his absolute denial of the fact of human nature, he gave her opportunity and excitement to unfold and illustrate her realism and acceptance of conditions. What is so noble is, that her realism is transparent with idea,—her human nature is the germ of a divine life. She proceeds in her search after the unity of things, the divine harmony, not by exclusion, as Mr. E. does, but by comprehension,—and so, no poorest, saddest spirit, but she will lead to hope and faith. I have thought, sometimes, that her acceptance of evil

was *too great*,—that her theory of the good to be educed proved too much. But in a conversation I had with her yesterday, I understood her better than I had done. 'It might never be sin to us, at the moment,' she said, 'it must be an excess, on which conscience puts the restraint.'"

The classes thus formed were renewed in November of each year, until Margaret's removal to New York, in 1844. But the notes of my principal reporter fail me at this point. Afterwards, I have only a few sketches from a younger hand. In November, 1841, the class numbered from twenty-five to thirty members: the general subject is stated as "Ethics." And the influences on Woman seem to have been discussed under the topics of the Family, the School, the Church, Society, and Literature. In November, 1842, Margaret writes that the meetings have been unusually spirited, and congratulates herself on the part taken in them by Miss Burley, as "a presence so positive as to be of great value to me." The general subject I do not find. But particular topics were such as these:—"Is the ideal first or last; divination or experience?"

"Persons who never awake to life in this world." "Mistakes;" "Faith;" "Creeds;" "Woman;" "Dæmonology;" "Influence;" "Catholicism" (Roman); "The Ideal."

In the winter of 1843-4, the general subject was "Education." Culture, Ignorance, Vanity, Prudence, Patience, and Health, appear to have been the titles of conversations, in which wide digressions, and much autobiographic illustration, with episodes on War, Bonaparte, Goethe, and Spinoza, were mingled. But the brief narrative may wind up with a note from Margaret on the last day.

"28*th April*, 1844.—It was the last day with my class. How noble has been my experience of such relations now for six years, and with so many and so various minds! Life is worth living, is it not?

"We had a most animated meeting. On bidding me good-bye, they all, and always, show so much good-will and love, that I feel I must really have become a friend to them. I was then loaded with beautiful gifts, accompanied with those little delicate poetic traits, of which I should delight to

tell you, if we were near. Last came a beautiful bouquet, passion-flower, heliotrope, and soberer blooms. Then I went to take my repose on C——'s sofa, and we had a most serene afternoon together."

JAMAICA PLAIN.

BY W. H. CHANNING.

"Quando
Lo raggio della grazia, onde s'accende
Verace amore, e che poi cresce amando,
Multiplicato in te tanto risplende,
Che ti conduce su per quella scala,
U' senza risalir nessun discende,
Qual ti negasse 'l vin della sua fiàla
Per la tua sete, in libertà non fôra,
Se non com' acqua ch' al marnon si cala."

DANTE.

"Weite Welt und breites Leben,
Langer Jahre redlich Streben,
Stets geforscht und stets gegründet,
Nie geschlossen, oft geründet,
Aeltestes bewahrt mit Treue,
Freundlich aufgefasstes Neue,
Heitern Sinn und reine Zwecke:
Nun! man kommt wohl eine Strecke."

GOETHE.

"My purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles."

TENNYSON.

"Remember how august the heart is. It contains the temple not only of Love but of Conscience; and a whisper is heard from the extremity of one to the extremity of the other."—LANDOR.

"If all the gentlest-hearted friends I knew
Concentred in one heart their gentleness,
That still grew gentler till its pulse was less
For life than pity,—I should yet be slow
To bring my own heart nakedly below
The palm of such a friend, that he should press
My false, ideal joy and fickle woe
Out to full light and knowledge."

ELIZABETH BARRETT.

VI.

JAMAICA PLAIN.

I.—FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

It was while Margaret was residing at Jamaica Plain, in the summer of 1839, that we first really met as friends, though for several years previous we had been upon terms of kindest mutual regard. And, as the best way of showing how her wonderful character opened upon me, the growth of our acquaintance shall be briefly traced.

The earliest recollection of Margaret is as a schoolmate of my sisters, in Boston. At that period she was considered a prodigy of talent and accomplishment; but a sad feeling prevailed, that she had been overtasked by her father, who wished to train her like a boy, and that she was paying the penalty for undue application, in near-sightedness, awkward manners, extravagant tendencies of thought, and a pedantic style of

talk, that made her a butt for the ridicule of frivolous companions. Some seasons later, I call to mind seeing, at the "Commencements" and "Exhibitions" of Harvard University, a girl, plain in appearance, but of dashing air, who was invariably the centre of a listening group, and kept their merry interest alive by sparkles of wit and incessant small-talk. The bystanders called her familiarly, "Margaret," "Margaret Fuller;" for, though young, she was already noted for conversational gifts, and had the rare skill of attracting to her society, not spirited collegians only, but men mature in culture and of established reputation. It was impossible not to admire her fluency and fun: yet, though curiosity was piqued as to this entertaining personage, I never sought an introduction, but, on the contrary, rather shunned encounter with one so armed from head to foot in saucy sprightliness.

About 1830, however, we often met in the social circles of Cambridge, and I began to observe her more nearly. At first, her vivacity, decisive tone, downrightness and contempt of conventional standards, continued to repel. She

appeared too *intense* in expression, action, emphasis, to be pleasing, and wanting in that *retenue* which we associate with delicate dignity. Occasionally, also, words flashed from her of such scathing satire, that prudence counselled the keeping at safe distance from a body so surcharged with electricity. Then, again, there was an imperial—shall it be said imperious?—air, exacting deference to her judgments and loyalty to her behests, that prompted pride to retaliatory measures. She paid slight heed, moreover, to the trim palings of etiquette, but swept through the garden-beds and into the doorway of one's confidence so cavalierly, that a reserved person felt inclined to lock himself up in his sanctum. Finally, to the coolly-scanning eye, her friendships wore a look of such romantic exaggeration, that she seemed to walk enveloped in a shining fog of sentimentalism. In brief, it must candidly be confessed, that I then suspected her of affecting the part of a Yankee Corinna.

But soon I was charmed, unaware, with the sagacity of her sallies, the profound thoughts carelessly dropped by her on transient topics, the breadth and richness of culture manifested in her

allusions or quotations, her easy comprehension of new views, her just discrimination, and, above all, her *truthfulness.* "Truth at all cost," was plainly her ruling maxim. This it was that made her criticism so trenchant, her contempt of pretence so quick and stern, her speech so naked in frankness, her gaze so searching, her whole attitude so alert. Her estimates of men, books, manners, events, art, duty, destiny, were moulded after a grand ideal; and she was a severe judge from the very loftiness of her standard. Her stately deportment, border though it might on arrogance, but expressed high-heartedness. Her independence, even if haughty and rash, was the natural action of a self-centred will, that waited only fit occasion to prove itself heroic. Her earnestness to read the hidden history of others was the gauge of her own emotion. The enthusiasm that made her speech so affluent, when measured by the average scale, was the unconscious overflow of a poetic temperament. And the ardour of her friends' affection proved the faithfulness of her love. Thus gradually the mist melted away, till I caught a glimpse of her real self. We were one evening talking of American literature,—

she contrasting its boyish crudity, half boastful, half timid, with the tempered, manly equipoise of thorough-bred European writers, and I asserting that in its mingled practicality and aspiration might be read bright auguries; when, betrayed by sympathy, she laid bare her secret hope of what woman might be and do, as an author, in our Republic. The sketch was an outline only, and dashed off with a few swift strokes, but therein appeared her own portrait, and we were strangers no more.

It was through the medium of others, however, that at this time I best learned to appreciate Margaret's nobleness of nature and principle. My most intimate friend in the Theological School, James Freeman Clarke, was her constant companion in exploring the rich gardens of German literature; and from his descriptions I formed a vivid image of her industry, comprehensiveness, buoyancy, patience, and came to honour her intelligent interest in high problems of science, her aspirations after spiritual greatness, her fine æsthetic taste, her religiousness. By power to quicken other minds, she showed how living was her own. Yet more near were we

brought by common attraction toward a youthful visitor in our circle, the untouched freshness of whose beauty was but the transparent garb of a serene, confiding, and harmonious soul, and whose polished grace, at once modest and naïve, sportive and sweet, fulfilled the charm of innate goodness of heart. Susceptible in temperament, anticipating with ardent fancy the lot of a lovely and refined woman, and morbidly exaggerating her own slight personal defects, Margaret seemed to long, as it were, to transfuse with her force this nymph-like form, and to fill her to glowing with her own lyric fire. No drop of envy tainted the sisterly love, with which she sought by genial sympathy thus to live in another's experience, to be her guardian-angel, to shield her from contact with the unworthy, to rouse each generous impulse, to invigorate thought by truth incarnate in beauty, and with unfelt ministry to weave bright threads in her web of fate. Thus more and more Margaret became an object of respectful interest, in whose honour, magnanimity and strength I learned implicitly to trust.

Separation, however, hindered our growing acquaintance, as we both left Cambridge, and,

with the exception of a few chance meetings in Boston and a ramble or two in the glens and on the beaches of Rhode Island, held no further intercourse till the summer of 1839, when, as has been already said, the friendship, long before rooted, grew up and leafed and bloomed.

II.—A CLUE.

I HAVE no hope of conveying to readers my sense of the beauty of our relation, as it lies in the past with brightness falling on it from Margaret's risen spirit. It would be like printing a chapter of autobiography, to describe what is so grateful in memory, its influence upon one's self. And much of her inner life, as confidentially disclosed, could not be represented without betraying a sacred trust. All that can be done is to open the outer courts, and give a clue for loving hearts to follow. To such these few sentences may serve as a guide.

"When I feel, as I do this morning, the poem of existence, I am repaid for all trial. The bitterness of wounded affection, the disgust at unworthy care, the aching sense of how far deeds are

transcended by our lowest aspirations, pass away as I lean on the bosom of Nature, and inhale new life from her breath. Could but love, like knowledge, be its own reward!"

"Oftentimes I have found in those of my own sex more gentleness, grace, and purity, than in myself; but seldom the heroism which I feel within my own breast. I blame not those who think the heart cannot bleed because it is so strong; but little they dream of what lies concealed beneath the determined courage. Yet mine has been the Spartan sternness, smiling while it hides the wound. I long rather for the Christian spirit, which even on the cross prays, 'Father, forgive them,' and rises above fortitude to heavenly satisfaction."

"Remember that only through aspirations, which sometimes make me what is called unreasonable, have I been enabled to vanquish unpropitious circumstances, and save my soul alive."

"All the good I have ever done has been by calling on every nature for its highest. I will admit that sometimes I have been wanting in gentleness, but never in tenderness, nor in noble faith."

"The heart which hopes and dares is also accessible to terror, and this falls upon it like a thunderbolt. It can never defend itself at the moment, it is so surprised. There is no defence but to strive for an equable temper of courageous submission, of obedient energy, that shall make assault less easy to the foe"

"*This* is the dart within the heart, as well as I can tell it :—At moments, the music of the universe, which daily I am upheld by hearing, seems to stop. I fall like a bird when the sun is eclipsed, not looking for such darkness. The sense of my individual law—that lamp of life—flickers. I am repelled in what is most natural to me. I feel as, when a suffering child, I would go and lie with my face to the ground, to sob away my little life."

"In early years, when, though so frank as to the thoughts of the mind, I put no heart confidence in any human being, my refuge was in my journal. I have burned those records of my youth, with its bitter tears, and struggles, and aspirations. Those aspirations were high, and have gained only broader foundations and wider reach. But the leaves had done their work. For years to write there, instead of speaking, had

enabled me to soothe myself; and the Spirit was often my friend, when I sought no other. Once again I am willing to take up the cross of loneliness. Resolves are idle, but the anguish of my soul has been deep. It will not be easy to profane life by rhetoric."

"I woke thinking of the monks of La Trappe; —how could they bear their silence? When the game of life was lost for me, in youthful anguish I knew well the desire for that vow; but if I had taken it, my heart would have burned out my physical existence long ago."

"Save me from plunging into the depths to learn the worst, or from being led astray by the winged joys of childish feeling. I pray for truth in proportion as there is strength to receive."

"My law is incapable of a charter. I pass all bounds, and cannot do otherwise. Those whom it seems to me I am to meet again in the Ages, I meet, soul to soul, now. I have no knowledge of any circumstances except the degree of affinity."

"I feel that my impatient nature needs the dark days. I would learn the art of limitation, without compromise, and act out my faith with a delicate fidelity. When loneliness becomes too

oppressive, I feel Him drawing me nearer, to be soothed by the smile of an All-Intelligent Love. He will not permit the freedom essential to growth to be checked. If I can give myself up to Him, I shall not be too proud, too impetuous, neither too timid, and fearful of a wound or cloud."

III.—TRANSCENDENTALISM.

The summer of 1839 saw the full dawn of the Transcendental movement in New England. The rise of this enthusiasm was as mysterious as that of any form of revival; and only they who were of the faith could comprehend how bright was this morning time of a new hope. Transcendentalism was an assertion of the inalienable integrity of man, of the immanence of Divinity in instinct. In part, it was a reaction against Puritan Orthodoxy; in part, an effect of renewed study of the ancients, of Oriental Pantheists, of Plato and the Alexandrians, of Plutarch's morals, Seneca and Epictetus; in part, the natural product of the culture of the place and time. On the somewhat stunted stock of Unitarianism,—whose characteristic dogma was trust in individual reason as correlative to Supreme Wisdom,—had been grafted

German Idealism, as taught by masters of most various schools,—by Kant and Jacobi, Fichte and Novalis, Schelling and Hegel, Schleiermacher and De Wette, by Madame de Stael, Cousin, Coleridge, and Carlyle; and the result was a vague yet exalting conception of the godlike nature of the human spirit. Transcendentalism, as viewed by its disciples, was a pilgrimage from the idolatrous world of creeds and rituals to the temple of the Living God in the soul. It was a putting to silence of tradition and formulas, that the Sacred Oracle might be heard through intuitions of the single-eyed and pure-hearted. Amidst materialists, zealots, and sceptics, the Transcendentalist believed in perpetual inspiration, the miraculous power of will, and a birthright to universal good. He sought to hold communion face to face with the unnameable Spirit of his spirit, and gave himself up to the embrace of nature's beautiful joy, as a babe seeks the breast of a mother. To him the curse seemed past; and love was without fear. "All mine is thine" sounded forth to him in ceaseless benediction, from flowers and stars, through the poetry, art, heroism of all ages, in the aspirations of his own

genius, and the budding promise of the time. His work was to be faithful, as all saints, sages, and lovers of man had been, to Truth, as the very Word of God. His maxims were,—"Trust, dare, and be; infinite good is ready for your asking; seek and find. All that your fellows can claim or need is that you should become, in fact, your highest self; fulfil, then, your ideal." Hence, among the strong, withdrawal to private study and contemplation, that they might be "alone with the alone;" solemn yet glad devotedness to the Divine leadings in the inmost will; calm concentration of thought to wait for and receive wisdom; dignified independence, stern yet sweet, of fashion and public opinion; honest originality of speech and conduct, exempt alike from apology or dictation, from servility or scorn. Hence, too, among the weak, whimsies, affectation, rude disregard of proprieties, slothful neglect of common duties, surrender to the claims of natural appetite, self-indulgence, self-absorption, and self-idolatry.

By their very posture of mind, as seekers of the new, the Transcendentalists were critics and "come-outers" from the old. Neither the church, the state, the college, society, nor even reform

associations, had a hold upon their hearts. The past might be well enough for those who, without make-belief, could yet put faith in common dogmas and usages; but for them the matin-bells of a new day were chiming, and the herald-trump of freedom was heard upon the mountains. Hence, leaving ecclesiastical organizations, political parties, and familiar circles, which to them were brown with drought, they sought in covert nooks of friendship for running waters, and fruit from the tree of life. The journal, the letter, became of greater worth than the printed page; for they felt that systematic results were not yet to be looked for, and that in sallies of conjecture, glimpses and flights of ecstasy, the "Newness" lifted her veil to her votaries. Thus, by mere attraction of affinity, grew together the brotherhood of the "Like-minded," as they were pleasantly nicknamed by outsiders, and by themselves, on the ground that no two were of the same opinion. The only password of membership to this association, which had no compact, records, or officers, was a hopeful and liberal spirit; and its chance conventions were determined merely by the desire of the caller for a "talk," or by the arrival of

some guest from a distance with a budget of presumptive novelties. Its "symposium" was a picnic, whereto each brought of his gains, as he felt prompted, a bunch of wild grapes from the woods, or bread-corn from his threshing-floor. The tone of the assemblies was cordial welcome for every one's peculiarity; and scholars, farmers, mechanics, merchants, married women, and maidens, met there on a level of courteous respect. The only guest not tolerated was intolerance; though strict justice might add, that these "Illuminati" were as unconscious of their special cant as smokers are of the perfume of their weed, and that a professed declaration of universal independence turned out in practice to be rather oligarchic.

Of the class of persons most frequently found at these meetings Margaret has left the following sketch:—

"'I am not mad, most noble Festus,' was Paul's rejoinder, as he turned upon his vulgar censor with the grace of a courtier, the dignity of a prophet, and the mildness of a saint. But many there are, who, adhering to the faith of the soul with that unusual earnestness which the world

calls 'mad,' can answer their critics only by the eloquence of their characters and lives. Now, the other day, while visiting a person whose highest merit, so far as I know, is to save his pennies, I was astounded by hearing him allude to some of most approved worth among us, thus: 'You know *we* consider *those men* insane.'

"What this meant, I could not at first well guess, so completely was my scale of character turned topsy-turvy. But revolving the subject afterward, I perceived that WE was the multiple of Festus, and THOSE MEN of Paul. All the circumstances seemed the same as in that Syrian hall; for the persons in question were they who cared more for doing good than for fortune and success,—more for the one risen from the dead than for fleshly life,—more for the Being in whom we live and move than for King Agrippa.

"Among this band of candidates for the madhouse, I found the young poet who valued insight of nature's beauty, and the power of chanting to his fellow-men a heavenly music, above the prospect of fortune, political power, or a standing in fashionable society. At the division of the goods of this earth, he was wandering like Schiller's

poet. But the difference between American and German regulations would seem to be, that in Germany the poet, when not 'with Jove,' is left at peace on earth; while here he is, by a self-constituted police, declared 'mad.'

"Another of this band was the young girl who, early taking a solemn view of the duties of life, found it difficult to serve an apprenticeship to its follies. She could not turn her sweetness into 'manner,' nor cultivate love of approbation at the expense of virginity of heart. In so called society she found no outlet for her truest, fairest self, and so preferred to live with external nature, a few friends, her pencil, instrument, and books. She, they say, is 'mad.'

"And he, the enthusiast for reform, who gives away fortune, standing in the world, peace, and only not life, because bigotry is now afraid to exact the pound of flesh as well as the ducats,—he, whose heart beats high with hopes for the welfare of his race, is 'mad.'

"And he, the philosopher, who does not tie down his speculation to the banner of the day, but lets the wings of his thought upbear him where they will, as if they were stronger and surer than

the balloon let off for the amusement of the populace,—he must be 'mad.' Off with him to the moon! that paradise of noble fools, who had visions of possibilities too grand and lovely for this sober earth.

"And ye, friends, and lovers, who see, through all the films of human nature, in those you love, a divine energy, worthy of creatures who have their being in very God, ye, too, are 'mad' to think they can walk in the dust, and yet shake it from their feet when they come upon the green. These are no winged Mercuries, no silver-sandalled Madonnas. Listen to 'the world's' truth and soberness, and we will show you that your heart would be as well placed in a hospital, as in these air-born palaces.

"And thou, priest, seek thy God among the people, and not in the shrine. The light need not penetrate thine own soul. Thou canst catch the true inspiration from the eyes of thy auditors. Not the Soul of the World, not the ever-flowing voice of nature, but the articulate accents of practical utility, should find thy ear ever ready. Keep always among men, and consider what they like; for in the silence of thine own breast will be

heard the voices that make men 'mad.' Why shouldst thou judge of the consciousness of others by thine own? May not thine own soul have been made morbid, by retiring too much within? If Jesus of Nazareth had not fasted and prayed so much alone, the devil could never have tempted him: if he had observed the public mind more patiently and carefully, he would have waited till the time was ripe, and the minds of men prepared for what he had to say. He would thus have escaped the ignominious death, which so prematurely cut short his 'usefulness.' Jewry would thus, gently, soberly, and without disturbance, have been led to a better course.

"'Children of this generation!'—ye Festuses and Agrippas!—ye are wiser, we grant, than 'the children of light;' yet we advise you to commend to a higher tribunal those whom much learning, or much love, has made 'mad.' For if they stay here, almost will they persuade even you!"

Amidst these meetings of the Transcendentalists it was, that, after years of separation, I again found Margaret. Of this body she was member by grace of nature. Her romantic freshness of heart,

her craving for the truth, her self-trust, had prepared her from childhood to be a pioneer in prairie-land; and her discipline in German schools had given definite form and tendency to her idealism. Her critical yet aspiring intellect filled her with longing for germs of positive affirmation in place of the chaff of thrice-sifted negation; while her æsthetic instinct responded in accord to the praise of Beauty as the beloved heir of Good and Truth, whose right it is to reign. On the other hand, strong common-sense saved her from becoming visionary, while she was too well-read as a scholar to be caught by conceits, and had been too sternly tried by sorrow to fall into fanciful effeminacy. It was a pleasing surprise to see how this friend of earlier days was acknowledged as a peer of the realm, in this new world of thought. Men,—her superiors in years, fame and social position,—treated her more with the frankness due from equal to equal, than the half-condescending deference with which scholars are wont to adapt themselves to women. They did not talk down to her standard, nor translate their dialect into popular phrase, but trusted to her power of interpretation. It was evident that they

prized her verdict, respected her criticism, feared her rebuke, and looked to her as an umpire. Very observable was it, also, how, in side-talks with her, they became confidential, seemed to glow and brighten into their best mood, and poured out in full measure what they but scantily hinted in the circle at large.

IV.—GENIUS.

It was quite a study to watch the phases through which Margaret passed, in one of these assemblies. There was something in the air and step with which she chose her place in the company, betokening an instinctive sense, that, in intellect, she was of blood royal and needed to ask no favours. And then she slowly gathered her attention to take in the significance of the scene. Near-sighted and habitually usuing an eye-glass, she rapidly scanned the forms and faces, pausing intently where the expression of particular heads or groups suggested thought, and ending her survey with some apt home-thrust to her next neighbours, as if to establish full *rapport*, and so to become a medium for the circulating life. Only when thus in magnetic relations with all

present, by a clear impress of their state and place, did she seem prepared to rise to a higher stage of communion. Then she listened, with ear finely vibrating to every tone, with all capacities responsive in sympathy, with a swift and ductile power of appreciation, that made her feel to the quick the varying moods of different speakers, and yet the while with coolest self-possession. Now and then a slight smile, flickering over her countenance, as lightning plays on the surface of a cloud, marked the inward process whereby she was harmonizing in equilibrium opposing thoughts. And, as occasion offered, a felicitous quotation, pungent apothegm, or symbolic epithet, dropped unawares in undertone, showed how swiftly scattered rays were brought in her mind to a focus.

When her turn came, by a graceful transition she resumed the subject where preceding speakers had left it, and, briefly summing up their results, proceeded to unfold her own view. Her opening was deliberate, like the progress of some massive force gaining its momentum; but as she felt her way, and moving in a congenial element, the sweep of her speech became grand. The style

of her eloquence was sententious, free from prettiness, direct, vigorous, charged with vitality. Articulateness, just emphasis, and varied accent, brought out most delicate shades and brilliant points of meaning, while a rhythmical collocation of words gave a finished form to every thought. She was affluent in historic illustration and literary allusion, as well as in novel hints. She knew how to concentrate into racy phrases the essential truth gathered from wide research, and distilled with patient toil; and by skilful treatment she could make green again the wastes of commonplace. Her statements, however rapid, showed breadth of comprehension, ready memory, impartial judgment, nice analysis of differences, power of penetrating through surfaces to realities, fixed regard to central laws and habitual communion with the Life of life. Critics, indeed, might have been tempted to sneer at a certain oracular grandiloquence, that bore away her soberness in moments of elation; though even the most captious must presently have smiled at the humour of her descriptive touches, her dexterous exposure of folly and pretension, the swift stroke of her bright wit, her shrewd discernment, promptitude,

and presence of mind. The reverential, too, might have been pained at the sternness wherewith popular men, measures and established customs, were tried and found guilty, at her tribunal; but even while blaming her aspirations as rash, revolutionary and impractical, no honest conservative could fail to recognise the sincerity of her aim. And every deep observer of character would have found the explanation of what seemed vehement or too highstrung, in the longing of a spirited woman to break every trammel that checked her growth or fettered her movement.

In conversations like these, one saw that the richness of Margaret's genius resulted from a rare combination of opposite qualities. To her might have been well applied the words first used as describing George Sand: "Thou large-brained Woman, and large-hearted Man." She blended in closest union and swift interplay feminine receptiveness with masculine energy. She was it once impressible and creative, impulsive and deliberate, pliant in sympathy yet firmly self-centred, confidingly responsive while commanding in originality. By the vivid intensity of her conceptions, she brought out in those around their

own consciousness, and, by the glowing vigour of her intellect, roused into action their torpid powers. On the other hand, she reproduced a truth, whose germ had just been imbibed from others, moulded after her own image, and quickened by her own life, with marvellous rapidity. And the presence of congenial minds so stimulated the prolific power of her imagination, that she was herself astonished at the fresh beauty of her newborn thoughts. "There is a mortifying sense," she writes, "of having played the Mirabeau after a talk with a circle of intelligent persons. They come with a store of acquired knowledge and reflection, on the subject in debate, about which I may know little, and have reflected less; yet, by mere apprehensiveness and prompt intuition, I may appear their superior. Spontaneously I appropriate all their material, and turn it to my own ends, as if it was my inheritance from a long train of ancestors. Rays of truth flash out at the moment, and they are startled by the light thrown over their familiar domain. Still they are gainers, for I give them new impulse, and they go on their way rejoicing in the bright glimpses they have caught. I should despise myself, if I purposely

appeared thus brilliant, but I am inspired as by a power higher than my own." All friends will bear witness to the strict fidelity of this sketch. There were seasons when she seemed borne irresistibly on to the verge of prophecy, and fully embodied one's notion of a sibyl.

Admirable as Margaret appeared in public, I was yet more affected by this peculiar mingling of impressibility and power to influence, when brought within her private sphere. I know not how otherwise to describe her subtle charm, than by saying that she was at once a clairvoyante and a magnetizer. She read another's bosom-secret, and she imparted of her own force. She interpreted the cipher in the talisman of one's destiny, that he had tried in vain to spell alone; by sympathy she brought out the invisible characters traced by experience on his heart; and in the mirror of her conscience he might see the image of his very self, as dwarfed in actual appearance, or developed after the divine ideal. Her sincerity was terrible. In her frank exposure no foible was spared, though by her very reproof she roused dormant courage and self-confidence. And so unerring seemed her insight, that her companion

felt as if standing bare before a disembodied spirit, and communicated without reserve thoughts and emotions, which, even to himself, he had scarcely named.

This penetration it was that caused Margaret to be so dreaded, in general society, by superficial observers. They, who came nigh enough to test the quality of her spirit, could not but perceive how impersonal was her justice; but, contrasted with the dead flat of conventional tolerance, her candour certainly looked rugged and sharp. The frivolous were annoyed at her contempt of their childishness, the ostentatious piqued at her insensibility to their show, and the decent scared lest they should be stripped of their shams; partisans were vexed by her spurning their leaders; and professional sneerers,—civil in public to those whom in private they slandered,—could not pardon the severe truth whereby she drew the sting from their spite. Indeed, how could so undisguised a censor but shock the prejudices of the moderate, and wound the sensibilities of the diffident; how but enrage the worshippers of new demigods in literature, art, and fashion, whose pet shrines she demolished; how but cut to the

quick, alike by silence or by speech, the self-love of the vain, whose claims she ignored? So gratuitous, indeed, appeared her hypercriticism, that I could not refrain from remonstrance, and to one of my appeals she thus replied: "If a horror for the mania of little great men, so prevalent in this country,—if aversion to the sentimental exaggerations to which so many minds are prone,—if finding that most men praise, as well as blame, too readily, and that overpraise desecrates the lips and makes the breath unworthy to blow the coal of devotion, —if rejection of the ——s and ——s, from a sense that the priestess must reserve her pæans for Apollo, —if untiring effort to form my mind to justice and revere only the superlatively good, that my praise might be praise;—if this be to offend, then have I offended."

V.—THE DIAL.

Several talks among the Transcendentalists, during the autumn of 1839, turned upon the propriety of establishing an organ for the expression of freer views than the conservative journals were ready to welcome. The result was the publication of the "Dial," the first number of which appeared

early in the summer of 1840, under the editorship of Margaret, aided by R. W. Emerson and George Ripley. How moderate were her own hopes, in regard to this enterprise, is clearly enough shown by passages from her correspondence.

"*Jamaica Plain, 22d March,* 1840. * * * I have a great deal written, but, as I read it over, scarce a word seems pertinent to the place or time. When I meet people, it is easy to adapt myself to them; but when I write, it is into another world,—not a better one, perhaps, but one with very dissimilar habits of thought to this wherein I am domesticated. How much those of us who have been formed by the European mind have to unlearn, and lay aside, if we would act here! I would fain do something worthily that belonged to the country where I was born, but most times I fear it may not be.

"What others can do,—whether all that has been said is the mere restlessness of discontent, or there are thoughts really struggling for utterance, —will be tested now. A perfectly free organ is to be offered for the expression of individual thought and character. There are no party measures to

be carried, no particular standard to be set up. A fair, calm tone, a recognition of universal principles, will, I hope, pervade the essays in every form. I trust there will be a spirit neither of dogmatism nor of compromise, and that this journal will aim, not at leading public opinion, but at stimulating each man to judge for himself, and to think more deeply and more nobly, by letting him see how some minds are kept alive by a wise self-trust. We must not be sanguine as to the amount of talent which will be brought to bear on this publication. All concerned are rather indifferent, and there is no great promise for the present. We cannot show high culture, and I doubt about vigorous thought. But we shall manifest free action as far as it goes, and a high aim. It were much if a periodical could be kept open, not to accomplish any outward object, but merely to afford an avenue for what of liberal and calm thought might be originated among us, by the wants of individual minds." * *

"*April* 19, 1840.—Things go on pretty well, but, doubtless, people will be disappointed, for they seem to be looking for the Gospel of Tran-

scendentalism. It may prove, as Jouffroy says it was with the successive French ministries: 'The public wants something positive, and, seeing that such and such persons are excellent at fault-finding, it raises them to be rulers, when, lo! they have no noble and full Yea, to match their shrill and bold Nay, and so are pulled down again.' Mr. Emerson knows best what he wants; but he has already said it in various ways. Yet, this experiment is well worth trying; hearts beat so high, they must be full of something, and here is a way to breathe it out quite freely. It is for dear New England that I want this review. For myself, if I had wished to write a few pages now and then, there were ways and means enough of disposing of them. But in truth I have not much to say; for since I have had leisure to look at myself, I find that, so far from being an original genius, I have not yet learned to think to any depth, and that the utmost I have done in life has been to form my character to a certain consistency, cultivate my tastes, and learn to tell the truth with a little better grace than I did at first. For this the world will not care much, so I shall hazard a few critical remarks only, or an unpre-

tending chalk sketch now and then, till I have learned to do something. There will be beautiful poesies; about prose we know not yet so well. We shall be the means of publishing the little Charles Emerson left as a mark of his noble course, and, though, it lies in fragments, all who read will be gainers."

"1840.—Since the Revolution, there has been little in the circumstances of this country to call out the higher sentiments. The effect of continued prosperity is the same on nations as on individuals,—it leaves the nobler faculties undeveloped. The need of bringing out the physical resources of a vast extent of country, the commercial and political fever incident to our institutions, tend to fix the eyes of men on what is local and temporary, on the external advantages of their condition. The superficial diffusion of knowledge, unless attended by a correspondent deepening of its sources, is likely to vulgarize rather than to raise the thought of a nation, depriving them of another sort of education through sentiments of reverence, and leading the multitude to believe themselves capable of judging what they but dimly discern. They see a wide

surface, and forget the difference between seeing and knowing. In this hasty way of thinking and living they traverse so much ground that they forget that not the sleeping railroad passenger, but the botanist, the geologist, the poet, really see the country, and that, to the former, 'a miss is as good as a mile.' In a word, the tendency of circumstances has been to make our people superficial, irreverent, and more anxious to get a living than to live mentally and morally. This tendency is no way balanced by the slight literary culture common here, which is mostly English, and consists in a careless reading of publications of the day, having the same utilitarian tendency with our own proceedings. The infrequency of acquaintance with any of the great fathers of English lore marks this state of things.

"New England is now old enough,—some there have leisure enough,—to look at all this; and the consequence is a violent reaction, in a small minority, against a mode of culture that rears such fruits. They see that political freedom does not necessarily produce liberality of mind, nor freedom in church institutions—vital religion; and, seeing that these changes cannot be wrought

from without inwards, they are trying to quicken the soul, that they may work from within outwards. Disgusted with the vulgarity of a commercial aristocracy, they become radicals; disgusted with the materialistic working of 'rational' religion, they become mystics. They quarrel with all that is, because it is not spiritual enough. They would, perhaps, be patient if they thought this the mere sensuality of childhood in our nation, which it might outgrow; but they think that they see the evil widening, deepening,—not only debasing the life, but corrupting the thought of our people; and they feel that if they know not well what should be done, yet that the duty of every good man is to utter a protest against what is done amiss.

"Is this protest undiscriminating? are these opinions crude? do these proceedings threaten to sap the bulwarks on which men at present depend? I confess it all, yet I see in these men promise of a better wisdom than in their opponents. Their hope for man is grounded on his destiny as an immortal soul, and not as a mere comfort-loving inhabitant of earth, or as a subscriber to the social contract. It was not meant that the soul

should cultivate the earth, but that the earth should educate and maintain the soul. Man is not made for society, but society is made for man. No institution can be good which does not tend to improve the individual. In these principles I have confidence so profound, that I am not afraid to trust those who hold them, despite their partial views, imperfectly developed characters, and frequent want of practical sagacity. I believe, if they have opportunity to state and discuss their opinions, they will gradually sift them, ascertain their grounds and aims with clearness, and do the work this country needs. I hope for them as for 'the leaven that is hidden in the bushel of meal, till all be leavened.' The leaven is not good by itself, neither is the meal; let them combine, and we shall yet have bread.

"Utopia it is impossible to build up. At least, my hopes for our race on this one planet are more limited than those of most of my friends. I accept the limitations of human nature, and believe a wise acknowledgment of them one of the best conditions of progress. Yet every noble scheme, every poetic manifestation, prophesies to man his eventual destiny. And were not man ever more sanguine

than facts at the moment justify, he would remain torpid, or be sunk in sensuality. It is on this ground that I sympathise with what is called the 'Transcendental party,' and that I feel their aim to be the true one. They acknowledge in the nature of man an arbiter for his deeds,—a standard transcending sense and time,—and are, in my view, the true utilitarians. They are but at the beginning of their course, and will, I hope, learn how to make use of the past, as well as to aspire for the future, and to be true in the present moment.

"My position as a woman, and the many private duties which have filled my life, have prevented my thinking deeply on several of the great subjects which these friends have at heart. I suppose, if ever I become capable of judging, I shall differ from most of them on important points. But I am not afraid to trust any who are true, and in intent noble, with their own course, nor to aid in enabling them to express their thoughts, whether I coincide with them or not.

"On the subject of Christianity, my mind is clear. If Divine, it will stand the test of any comparison. I believe the reason it has so imper-

fectly answered to the aspirations of its Founder is, that men have received it on external grounds. I believe that a religion, thus received, may give the life an external decorum, but will never open the fountains of holiness in the soul.

" One often thinks of Hamlet as the true representative of idealism in its excess. Yet if, in his short life, man be liable to some excess, should we not rather prefer to have the will palsied like Hamlet, by a deep-searching tendency and desire for poetic perfection, than to have it enlightened by worldly sagacity, as in the case of Julius Cæsar, or made intense by pride alone, as in that of Coriolanus?

" After all, I believe it is absurd to attempt to speak on these subjects within the limits of a letter. I will try to say what I mean in print some day. Yet one word as to the 'material' in man. Is it not the object of all philosophy, as well as of religion and poetry, to prevent its prevalence? Must not those who see most truly be ever making statements of the truth to combat this sluggishness, or worldliness? What else are sages, poets, preachers, born to do? Men go an undulating course—sometimes on the hill, some-

times in the valley. But he only is in the right who in the valley forgets not the hill-prospect, and knows in darkness that the sun will rise again. That is the real life which is subordinated to, not merged in, the ideal; he is only wise who can bring the lowest act of his life into sympathy with its highest thought. And this I take to be the one only aim of our pilgrimage here. I agree with those who think that no true philosophy will try to ignore or annihilate the material part of man, but will rather seek to put it in its place, as servant and minister to the soul."

VI.—THE WOMAN.

In 1839, I had met Margaret upon the plane of intellect. In the summer of 1840, on my return from the West, she was to be revealed in a new aspect.

It was a radiant and refreshing morning, when I entered the parlour of her pleasant house, standing upon a slope beyond Jamaica Plain to the south. She was absent at the moment, and there was opportunity to look from the windows on a cheerful prospect, over orchards and meadows, to

the wooded hills and the western sky. Presently Margaret appeared, bearing in her hand a vase of flowers, which she had been gathering in the garden. After exchange of greetings, her first words were of the flowers, each of which was symbolic to her of emotion, and associated with the memory of some friend. I remember her references only to the Daphne Odora, the Provence Rose, the sweet-scented Verbena, and the Heliotrope; the latter being her chosen emblem, true bride of the sun that it is.

From flowers she passed to engravings hanging round the room. "Here," said she, "are Dante and Beatrice.

> "'Approach, and know that I am Beatrice.
> The power of ancient love was strong within me.'

"She is beautiful enough, is not she, for that higher moment? But Dante! Yet who could paint a Dante—and Dante in heaven? They give but his shadow, as he walked in the forest maze of earth. Then here is the Madonna del Pesce; not divine, like the Foligno, not deeply maternal, like the Seggiola, not the beatified 'Mother of God' of the Dresden gallery, but graceful, and 'not too bright and good for human nature's daily food.'

And here is Raphael himself, the young seer of beauty, with eyes softly contemplative, yet lit with central fires," &c.

There were gems, too, and medallions and seals, to be examined, each enigmatical, and each blended by remembrances with some fair hour of her past life.

Talk on art led the way to Greece and the Greeks, whose mythology Margaret was studying afresh. She had been culling the blooms of that poetic land, and could not but offer me leaves from her garland. She spoke of the statue of Minerva-Polias, cut roughly from an olive-tree, yet cherished as the heaven-descended image of the most sacred shrine, to which was due the Panathenaic festival. "The less ideal perfection in the figure, the greater the reverence of the adorer. Was not this because spiritual imagination makes light of results, and needs only a germ whence to unfold Olympic splendours?"

She spoke of the wooden column left standing from the ruins of the first temple to Juno, amidst the marble walls of the magnificent fane erected in its place:—"This is a most beautiful type, is

not it, of the manner in which life's earliest experiences become glorified by our perfecting destiny?"

"In the temple of Love and the Graces, one Grace bore a rose, a second a branch of myrtle, a third dice—who can read that riddle?"

"'Better is it,' said Apollonius, 'on entering a small shrine to find there a statue of gold and ivory, than in a large temple to behold only a coarse figure of terra cotta.' How often, after leaving with disgust the so-called great affairs of men, do we find traces of angels' visits in quiet scenes of home.

"The Hours and the Graces appear as ornaments on all thrones and shrines, except those of Vulcan and Pluto. Alas for us, when we become so sunk in utilitarian toil as to be blind to the beauty with which even common cares are daily wreathed!"

And so on and on, with myth and allusion.

Next, Margaret spoke of the friends whose generosity had provided the decorations on her walls, and the illustrated books for her table,—friends who were fellow-students in art, history,

or science,—friends whose very life she shared. Her heart seemed full to overflow with sympathy for their joys and sorrows, their special trials and struggles, their peculiar tendencies of character and respective relations. The existence of each was to her a sacred process, whose developments she watched with awe, and whose leadings she reverently sought to aid. She had scores of pretty anecdotes to tell, sweet bowers of sentiment to open, significant lessons of experience to interpret, and scraps of journals or letters to read aloud, as the speediest means of introducing me to her chosen circle. There was a fascinating spell in her piquant descriptions, and a genial glow of sympathy animated to characteristic movement the figures, who in varying pantomime replaced one another on the theatre of her fancy. Frost-bound New England melted into a dream-land of romance beneath the spice-breeze of her Eastern narrative. Sticklers for propriety might have found fault at the freedom with which she confided her friends' histories to one who was a comparative stranger to them; but I could not but note how conscientiousness reined in her sensibilities and curbed her career, as they reached

the due bounds of privacy. She did but realize one's conception of the transparent truthfulness that will pervade advanced societies of the future, where the very atmosphere shall be honourable faith.

Nearer and nearer Margaret was approaching a secret throned in her heart that day; and the preceding transitions were but a prelude of her orchestra before the entrance of the festal group. Unconsciously she made these preparations for paying worthy honours to a high sentiment. She had lately heard of the betrothal of two of her best-loved friends; and she wished to communicate the graceful story in a way that should do justice to the facts and to her own feelings. It was by a spontaneous impulse of her genius, and with no voluntary foreshaping, that she had grouped the previous tales; but no drama could have been more artistically constructed than the steps whereby she led me onward to the denouement; and the look, tone, words, with which she told it, were fluent with melody as the song of an improvisatrice.

Scarcely had she finished, when, offering some light refreshment,—as it was now past noon,—

she proposed a walk in the open air. She led the way to Bussey's wood, her favourite retreat during the past year, where she had thought and read, or talked with intimate friends. We climbed the rocky path, resting a moment or two at every pretty point, till, reaching a moss-cushioned ledge near the summit, she seated herself. For a time she was silent, entranced in delighted communion with the exquisite hue of the sky, seen through interlacing boughs and trembling leaves, and the play of shine and shadow over the wide landscape. But soon, arousing from her reverie, she took up the thread of the morning's talk. My part was to listen; for I was absorbed in contemplating this, to me, quite novel form of character. It has been seen how my early distaste for Margaret's society was gradually changed to admiration. Like all her friends, I had passed through an avenue of sphinxes before reaching the temple. But now it appeared that thus far I had never been admitted to the adytum.

As, leaning on one arm, she poured out her stream of thought, turning now and then her eyes full upon me, to see whether I caught her meaning, there was leisure to study her thoroughly.

Her temperament was predominantly what the physiologists would call nervous-sanguine; and the grey eye, rich brown hair and light complexion, with the muscular and well-developed frame, bespoke delicacy balanced by vigour. Here was a sensitive yet powerful being, fit at once for rapture or sustained effort, intensely active, prompt for adventure, firm for trial. She certainly had not beauty; yet the high arched dome of the head, the changeful expressiveness of every feature, and her whole air of mingled dignity and impulse, gave her a commanding charm. Especially characteristic were two physical traits. The first was a contraction of the eyelids almost to a point,—a trick caught from near-sightedness,—and then a sudden dilation, till the iris seemed to emit flashes;—an effect, no doubt, dependent on her highly-magnetized condition. The second was a singular pliancy of the vertebræ and muscles of the neck, enabling her by a mere movement to denote each varying emotion; in moments of tenderness, or pensive feeling, its curves were swan-like in grace, but when she was scornful or indignant, it contracted, and made swift turns like that of a bird of prey. Finally, in the animation,

yet *abandon* of Margaret's attitude and look, were rarely blended the fiery force of northern, and the soft languor of southern races.

Meantime, as I was thus, through her physiognomy, tracing the outlines of her spiritual form, she was narrating chapters from the book of experience. How superficially, heretofore, had I known her! We had met chiefly as scholars. But now I saw before me one whose whole life had been a poem,—of boundless aspiration and hope almost wild in its daring,—of indomitable effort amidst poignant disappointment,—of widest range, yet persistent unity. Yes! here was a poet indeed, a true worshipper of Apollo, who had steadfastly striven to brighten and make glad existence, to harmonise all jarring and discordant strings, to fuse most hard conditions and cast them in a symmetric mould, to piece fragmentary fortunes into a mosaic symbol of heavenly order. Here was one, fond as a child of joy, eager as a native of the tropics for swift transition from luxurious rest to passionate excitement, prodigal to pour her mingled force of will, thought, sentiment, into the life of the moment, all radiant with imagination, longing for communion with artists of every age in

their inspired hours, fitted by genius and culture to mingle as an equal in the most refined circles of Europe; and yet her youth and early womanhood had passed away amid the very decent, yet drudging, descendants of the prim Puritans. Trained among those who could have discerned her peculiar power, and early fed with the fruits of beauty for which her spirit pined, she would have developed into one of the finest lyrists, romancers, and critics, that the modern literary world has seen. This she knew; and this tantalization of her fate she keenly felt.

But the tragedy of Margaret's history was deeper yet. Behind the poet was the woman—the fond and relying, the heroic and disinterested woman. The very glow of her poetic enthusiasm was but an outflush of trustful affection; the very restlessness of her intellect was the confession that her heart had found no home. A "bookworm," "a dilettante," "a pedant," I had heard her sneeringly called; but now it was evident that her seeming insensibility was virgin pride, and her absorption in study the natural vent of emotions, which had met no object worthy of life-long attachment. At once, many of her pecu-

liarities became intelligible. Fitfulness, unlooked-for changes of mood, misconceptions of words and actions, substitution of fancy for fact,—which had annoyed me during the previous season, as inconsistent in a person of such capacious judgment and sustained self-government,—were now referred to the morbid influence of affections pent up to prey upon themselves. And, what was still more interesting, the clue was given to a singular credulousness, by which, in spite of her unusual penetration, Margaret might be led away blindfold. As this revelation of her ardent nature burst upon me, and as, rapidly recalling the past, I saw how faithful she had kept to her high purposes,—how patient, gentle, and thoughtful for others, how active in self-improvement and usefulness, how wisely dignified she had been,—I could not but bow to her in reverence.

We walked back to the house amid a rosy sunset, and it was with no surprise that I heard her complain of an agonizing nervous headache, which compelled her at once to retire, and call for assistance. As for myself, while going homeward, I reflected with astonishment on the unflagging spiritual energy with which, for hour after hour,

she had swept over lands and seas of thought, and, as my own excitement cooled, I became conscious of exhaustion, as if a week's life had been concentrated in a day.

The interview, thus hastily sketched, may serve as a fair type of our usual intercourse. Always I found her open-eyed to beauty, fresh for wonder, with wings poised for flight, and fanning the coming breeze of inspiration. Always she seemed to see before her,—

> "A shape all light, which with one hand did fling
> Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,
> And the invisible rain did ever sing
> A silver music on the mossy lawn."

Yet more and more distinctly did I catch a plaintive tone of sorrow in her thought and speech, like the wail of an Æolian harp heard at intervals from some upper window. She had never met one who could love her as she could love; and in the orange-grove of her affections the white perfumed blossoms and golden fruit wasted away unclaimed. Through the mask of slight personal defects and ungraceful manners, of superficial hauteur and egotism, and occasional extravagance of sentiment, no equal had recognised the rare beauty of her spirit. She was yet alone.

Among her papers remains this pathetic petition:—

"I am weary of thinking. I suffer great fatigue from living. Oh God, take me! take me wholly! Thou knowest that I love none but Thee. All this beautiful poesy of my being lies in Thee. Deeply I feel it. I ask nothing. Each desire, each passionate feeling, is on the surface only; inmostly thou keepest me strong and pure. Yet always to be thus going out into moments, into nature, and love, and thought! Father, I am weary! Reassume me for a while, I pray Thee. Oh, let me rest awhile in Thee, Thou only Love! In the depth of my prayer I suffer much. Take me only awhile. No fellow-being will receive me. I cannot pause; they will not detain me by their love. Take me awhile, and again I will go forth on a renewed service. It is not that I repine, my Father, but I sink from want of rest, and none will shelter me. Thou knowest it all. Bathe me in the living waters of Thy Love."

VII.—THE FRIEND.

Yet, conscious as she was of an unfulfilled destiny, and of an undeveloped being, Margaret was no pining sentimentalist. The gums oozing from wounded boughs she burned as incense in her oratory; but in outward relations she was munificent with sympathy. "Let me be Theodora, a bearer of heavenly gifts to my fellows," is written in her journals, and her life fulfilled the aspiration. The more one observed her, the more surprising appeared the variety, earnestness, and constancy of her friendships. Far and wide reached her wires of communication, and incessant was the interchange of messages of good-will. She was never so preoccupied and absorbed as to deny a claimant for her affectionate interest, she never turned her visitors back upon themselves, mortified and vexed at being misunderstood. With delicate justice she appreciated the special form, force, tendency of utterly dissimilar characters; and her heart responded to every appeal alike of humblest suffering or loftiest endeavour. In the plain, yet eloquent phrase of the backwoodsman, "the string of her door-latch was always out,"

and every wayfarer was free to share the shelter of her roof, or a seat beside her hearth-stone. Or, rather, it might be said, in symbol of her wealth of spirit, her palace, with its galleries of art, its libraries and festal-halls, welcomed all guests who could enjoy and use them.

She was, indeed, The Friend. This was her vocation. She bore at her girdle a golden key to unlock all caskets of confidence. Into whatever home she entered she brought a benediction of truth, justice, tolerance, and honour; and to every one who sought her to confess, or seek counsel, she spoke the needed word of stern yet benignant wisdom. To how many was the forming of her acquaintance an era of renovation, of awakening from sloth, indulgence or despair, to heroic mastery of fate, of inward serenity and strength, of new-birth to real self-hood, of catholic sympathies, of energy consecrated to the Supreme Good. Thus writes to her one who stands among the foremost in his own department:—"What I am I owe, in large measure, to the stimulus you imparted. You roused my heart with high hopes; you raised my aims from paltry and vain pursuits to those which tasked and fed the soul; you inspired

me with a great ambition, and made me see the worth and meaning of life; you awakened in me confidence in my own powers, showed me my special and distinct ability, and quickened my individual consciousness by intelligent sympathy with tendencies and feelings which I but half understood; you gave me to myself. This is a most benign influence to exercise, and for it, above all other benefits, gratitude is due. Therefore have you an inexhaustible bank of gratitude to draw from. Bless God that he has allotted to you such a ministry."

The following extracts from her letters will show how profusely Margaret poured out her treasures upon her friends; but they reveal, too, the painful processes of alchemy whereby she transmuted her lead into gold.

"Your idea of friendship apparently does not include intellectual intimacy, as mine does, but consists of mutual esteem and spiritual encouragement. This is the thought represented, on antique gems and bas-reliefs, of the meeting between God and Goddess, I find; for they rather offer one another the full flower of being, than grow together.

As in the figures before me, Jupiter, king of Gods and men, meets Juno, the sister and queen, not as a chivalric suppliant, but as a stately claimant; and she, crowned, pure, majestic, holds the veil aside to reveal herself to her august spouse."

"How variously friendship is represented in literature! Sometimes the two friends kindle beacons from afar to apprise one another that they are constant, vigilant, and each content in his several home. Sometimes, two pilgrims, they go different routes in service of the same saint, and remember one another as they give alms, learn wisdom, or pray in shrines along the road. Sometimes, two knights, they bid farewell with mailed hand of truth and honour all unstained, as they ride forth on their chosen path to test the spirit of high emprise, and free the world from wrong,—to meet again for unexpected succour in the hour of peril, or in joyful surprise to share a frugal banquet on the plat of greensward opening from forest glades. Sometimes, proprietors of two neighbouring estates, they have interviews in the evening, to communicate their experiments and plans, or to study together the stars from an ob-

servatory; if either is engaged he simply declares it; they share enjoyments cordially; they exchange praise or blame frankly; in citizen-like good-fellowship they impart their gains.

" All these views of friendship are noble and beautiful, yet they are not enough for our manifold nature. Friends should be our incentives to Right, yet not only our guiding, but our prophetic stars. To love by sight is much, to love by faith is more; together they make up the entire love, without which heart, mind, and soul cannot be alike satisfied. Friends should love not merely for the absolute worth of each to the other, but on account of a mutual fitness of character. They are not merely one another's priests or gods, but ministering angels, exercising in their part the same function as the Great Soul does in the whole, —of seeing the perfect through the imperfect, nay, creating it there. Why am I to love my friend the less for any obstruction in his life? Is not that the very time for me to love most tenderly, when I must see his life in despite of seeming? When he shows it to me I can only admire; I do not give myself I am taken captive.

"But how shall I express my meaning? Perhaps I can do so from the tales of chivalry, where I find what corresponds far more thoroughly with my nature, than in these stoical statements. The friend of Amadis expects to hear prodigies of valour of the absent Preux, but if he be mutilated in one of his first battles, shall he be mistrusted by the brother of his soul, more than if he had been tested in a hundred? If Britomart finds Artegall bound in the enchanter's spell, can she doubt therefore him whom she has seen in the magic glass? A Britomart does battle in his cause, and frees him from the evil power, while a dame of less nobleness might sit and watch the enchanted sleep, weeping night and day, or spur on her white palfrey to find some one more helpful than herself. These friends in chivalry are always faithful through the dark hours to the bright. The Douglas motto, 'Tender and true,' seems to me most worthy of the strongest breast. To borrow again from Spenser, I am entirely satisfied with the fate of the three brothers. I could not die while there was yet life in my brother's breast. I would return from the shades and nerve him with twofold life for the fight. I could do it, for

our hearts beat with one blood. Do you not see the truth and happiness of this waiting tenderness? The verse—

> "'Have I a lover
> Who is noble and free,
> I would he were nobler
> Than to love me,'——

does not come home to my heart, though *this* does:—

> "'I could not love thee, sweet, so much
> Loved I not honour more.'"

* * * "*October* 10*th*, 1840.—I felt singular pleasure in seeing you quote Hood's lines on 'Melancholy.' I thought nobody knew and loved his serious poems except myself, and two or three others, to whom I imparted them.* Do you like, also, the ode to Autumn, and—

> "'Sigh on, sad heart, for love's eclipse.'

"It was a beautiful time when I first read these poems. I was staying in Hallowell, Maine, and could find no books that I liked, except Hood's poems. You know how the town is built, like a terraced garden on the river's bank; I used to go every afternoon to the granite quarry which

* This was some years before their reprint in America, it should be noticed.

crowns these terraces, and read till the sunset came casting its last glory on the opposite bank. They were such afternoons as those in September and October, clear, soft, and radiant. Nature held nothing back. 'Tis many years since, and I have never again seen the Kennebec, but remember it as a stream of noble character. It was the first river I ever sailed up, realizing all which that emblem discloses of life. Greater still would the charm have been to sail downward along an unknown stream, seeking not a home, but a ship upon the ocean."

"*Newbury, Oct.* 18, 1840.—It rained, and the day was pale and sorrowful, the thick-fallen leaves even shrouded the river. We went out in the boat, and sat under the bridge. The pallid silence, the constant fall of the rain and leaves, were most soothing, life had been for many weeks so crowded with thought and feeling, pain and pleasure, rapture and care. Nature seemed gently to fold us in her matron's mantle. On such days the fall of the leaf does not bring sadness,—only meditation. Earth seemed to lose the record of past summer hours from her permanent life, as

lightly, and spontaneously, as the great genius casts behind him a literature,—the Odyssey he has outgrown. In the evening the rain ceased, the west wind came, and we went out in the boat again for some hours; indeed, we stayed till the last clouds passed from the moon. Then we climbed the hill to see the full light in solemn sweetness over fields, and trees, and river.

"I never enjoyed anything more in its way than the three days alone with———in her boat, upon the little river. Not without reason was it that Goethe limits the days of intercourse to *three*, in the Wanderjahre. If you have lived so long in uninterrupted communion with any noble being, and with nature, a remembrance of man's limitations seems to call on Polycrates to cast forth his ring. She seemed the very genius of the scene, so calm, so lofty, and so secluded. I never saw any place that seemed to me so much like home. The beauty, though so great, is so unobtrusive.

"As we glided along the river, I could frame my community far more naturally and rationally than———. A few friends should settle upon the banks of a stream like this, planting their homesteads. Some should be farmers, some woodmen,

others bakers, millers, &c. By land, they should carry to one another the commodities; on the river they should meet for society. At sunset many, of course, would be out in their boats, but they would love the hour too much ever to disturb one another. I saw the spot where we should discuss the high mysteries that Milton speaks of. Also, I saw the spot where I would invite select friends to live through the noon of night, in silent communion. When we wished to have merely playful chat, or talk on politics or social reform, we would gather in the mill, and arrange those affairs while grinding the corn. What a happy place for children to grow up in! Would it not suit little——to go to school to the cardinal flowers in her boat, beneath the great oak-tree? I think she would learn more than in a phalanx of juvenile florists. But, truly, why has such a thing never been? One of these valleys so immediately suggests an image of the fair company that might fill it, and live so easily, so naturally, so wisely. Can we not people the banks of some such affectionate little stream? I distrust ambitious plans, such as Phalansterian organizations!

"—— is quite bent on trying his experiment.

I hope he may succeed; but as they were talking the other evening, I thought of the river, and all the pretty symbols the tide-mill presents, and felt if I could at all adjust the economics to the more simple procedure, I would far rather be the miller, hoping to attract, by natural affinity, some congenial baker, 'und so weiter.' However, one thing seems sure, that many persons will soon, somehow, somewhere, throw off a part, at least, of these terrible weights of the social contract, and see if they cannot lie more at ease in the lap of Nature. I do not feel the same interest in these plans, as if I had a firmer hold on life, but I listen with much pleasure to the good suggestions."

"*Oct.* 19*th*, 1840. ——— was here. Generally I go out of the room when he comes, for his great excitability makes me nervous, and his fondness for detail is wearisome. But to-night I was too much fatigued to do anything else, and did not like to leave mother; so I lay on the sofa while she talked with him.

"My mind often wandered, yet ever and anon, as I listened again to him, I was struck with admiration at the compensations of Nature. Here

is a man, isolated from his kind beyond any I know, of an ambitious temper and without an object, of tender affections and without a love or a friend. I don't suppose any mortal, unless it be his aged mother, cares more for him than we do—scarce any value him so much. The disease, which has left him, in the eyes of men, a scathed and blighted tree, has driven him back to Nature, and she has not refused him sympathy. I was surprised by the refinement of his observations on the animals, his pets. He has carried his intercourse with them to a degree of perfection we rarely attain with our human friends. There is no misunderstanding between him and his dogs and birds; and how rich has been the acquaintance in suggestion! Then the flowers! I liked to hear him, for he recorded all their pretty ways—not like a botanist, but a lover. His interview with the Magnolia of Lake Pontchartrain was most romantic. And what he said of the Yuca seems to me so pretty, that I will write it down, though somewhat more concisely than he told it:—

" 'I had kept these plants of the Yuca Filamentosa six or seven years, though they had never bloomed. I knew nothing of them, and had no

notion of what feelings they would excite. Last June I found in bud the one which had the most favourable exposure. A week or two after, another, which was more in the shade, put out flower-buds, and I thought I should be able to watch them, one after the other; but, no! the one which was most favoured waited for the other, and both flowered together at the full of the moon. This struck me as very singular, but as soon as I saw the flower by moonlight I understood it. This flower is made for the moon, as the Heliotrope is for the sun, and refuses other influences or to display her beauty in any other light.

"'The first night I saw it in flower, I was conscious of a peculiar delight, I may even say rapture. Many white flowers are far more beautiful by day; the lily, for instance, with its firm, thick leaf, needs the broadest light to manifest its purity. But these transparent leaves of greenish white, which look dull in the day, are melted by the moon to glistening silver. And not only does the plant not appear in its destined hue by day, but the flower, though, as bell-shaped, it cannot quite close again after having once expanded, yet

presses its petals together as closely as it can, hangs down its little blossoms, and its tall stalk seems at noon to have reared itself only to betray a shabby insignificance. Thus, too, with the leaves, which have burst asunder suddenly like the fan-palm to make way for the stalk,—their edges in the day-time look ragged and unfinished, as if nature had left them in a hurry for some more pleasing task. On the day after the evening when I had thought it so beautiful, I could not conceive how I had made such a mistake.

" ' But the second evening I went out into the garden again. In clearest moonlight stood my flower, more beautiful than ever. The stalk pierced the air like a spear, all the little bells had erected themselves around it in most graceful array, with petals more transparent than silver, and of softer light than the diamond. Their edges were clearly but not sharply defined. They seemed to have been made by the moon's rays. The leaves, which had looked ragged by day, now seemed fringed by most delicate gossamer, and the plant might claim with pride its distinctive epithet of Filamentosa. I looked at it

till my feeling became so strong that I longed to share it. The thought which filled my mind was, that here we saw the type of pure feminine beauty in the moon's own flower. I have since had further opportunity of watching the Yuca, and verified these observations, that she will not flower till the full moon, and chooses to hide her beauty from the eye of day.

"Might not this be made into a true poem, if written out merely as history of the plant, and no observer introduced? How finely it harmonizes with all legends of Isis, Diana, &c.! It is what I tried to say in the sonnet,—

"'Woman's heaven,
Where palest lights a silvery sheen diffuse.'

"In tracing these correspondencies, one really does take hold of a Truth, of a Divine Thought." * *

"*October 25th,* 1840.—This week I have not read any book, nor once walked in the woods and fields. I meant to give its days to setting outward things in order, and its evenings to writing. But, I know not how it is, I can never simplify my life: always so many ties, so many claims! However, soon the winter winds will chant matins and

vespers, which may make my house a cell, and in a snowy veil enfold me for my prayer. If I cannot dedicate myself this time, I will not expect it again. Surely it should be! These Carnival masks have crowded on me long enough, and Lent must be at hand. * *

"—— and —— have been writing me letters, to answer which required all the time and thought I could give for a day or two. ——'s were of joyful recognition, and so beautiful I would give much to show them to you. ——'s have singularly affected me. They are noble, wise, of most unfriendly friendliness. I don't know why it is, I always seem to myself to have gone so much further with a friend than I really have. Just as at Newport I thought —— met me, when he did not, and sang a joyful song which found no echo, so here —— asks me questions which I thought had been answered in the first days of our acquaintance, and coldly enumerates all the charming qualities which make it impossible for him to part with me! He scolds me, though in the sweetest and solemnest way. I will not quote his words, though their beauty tempts me, for they do not apply, they do not touch ME.

"Why is it that the religion of my nature is so much hidden from my peers? why do they question me, who never question them? why persist to regard as a meteor an orb of assured hope? Can no soul know me wholly? shall I never know the deep delight of gratitude to any but the All-Knowing? I shall wait for —— very peaceably, in reverent love as ever; but I cannot see why he should not have the pleasure of knowing now a friend, who has been 'so tender and true.'"

"—— was here, and spent twenty-four hours in telling me a tale of deepest tragedy. Its sad changes should be written out in Godwin's best manner: such are the themes he loved, as did also Rousseau. Through all the dark shadows shone a pure white ray, one high, spiritual character, a man, too, and of advanced age. I begin to respect men more,—I mean actual men. What men may be, I know: but the men of to-day have seemed to me of such coarse fibre, or else such poor man-shadows!

"—— had scarcely gone, when —— came and wished to spend a few hours with me. I was totally exhausted, but I lay down, and she sat

beside me, and poured out all her noble feelings and bright fancies. There was little light in the room, and she gleamed like a cloud

> ——— 'of pearl and opal,'

and reminded me more than ever of

> ——— 'the light-hair'd Lombardess
> Singing a song of her own native land,'

to the dying Correggio, beside the fountain.

"I am astonished to see how much Bettine's book is to all these people. This shows how little courage they have had to live out themselves. She really brings them a revelation. The men wish they had been loved by Bettine; the girls wish to write down the thoughts that come, and see if just such a book does not grow up. ——, however, was one of the few who do not overestimate her; she truly though Bettine only publishes what many burn. Would not genius be common as light, if men trusted their higher selves?"

"I heard in town that —— is a father, and has gone to see his child. This news made me more grave even than such news usually does; I suppose, because I have known the growth of his character so intimately. I called to mind a letter

he had written me of what we had expected of our fathers. The ideal father, the profoundly wise, provident, divinely tender and benign, he is indeed the God of the human heart. How solemn this moment of being called to prepare the way, to *make way* for another generation! What fulfilment does it claim in the character of a man, that he should be worthy to be a father!—what purity of motive, what dignity, what knowledge! When I recollect how deep the anguish, how deeper still the want, with which I walked alone in hours of childish passion, and called for a Father, often saying the word a hundred times, till stifled by sobs, how great seems the duty that name imposes! Were but the harmony preserved throughout! Could the child keep learning his earthly, as he does his heavenly Father, from all best experience of life, till at last it were the climax: 'I am the Father. Have ye seen me?—ye have seen the Father.' But how many sons have we to make one father? Surely, to spirits, not only purified but perfected, this must appear the climax of earthly being,—a wise and worthy parentage. Here I always sympathise with Mr. Alcott. He views the relation truly."

" *Dec.* 3, 1840. —— bids me regard her 'as a sick child;' and the words recal some of the sweetest hours of existence. My brother Edward was born on my birth-day, and they said he should be my child. But he sickened and died just as the bud of his existence showed its first bright hues. He was some weeks wasting away, and I took care of him always half the night. He was a beautiful child, and became very dear to me then. Still, in lonely woods, the upturned violets show me the pleading softness of his large blue eyes, in those hours when I would have given worlds to prevent his suffering, and could not. I used to carry him about in my arms for hours; it soothed him, and I loved to feel his gentle weight of helpless purity upon my heart, while night listened around. At last, when death came, and the soul took wing, like an over-tasked bird, from his sweet form, I felt what I feel now. Might I free ——, as that angel freed him!

" In daily life I could never hope to be an unfailing fountain of energy and bounteous love. My health is frail; my earthly life is shrunk to a scanty rill; I am little better than an aspiration, which the ages will reward, by empowering me to

incessant acts of vigorous beauty. But now it is well with me to be with those who do not suffer overmuch to have me suffer. It is best for me to serve where I can better bear to fall short. I could visit —— more nobly than in daily life, through the soul of our souls. When she named me her priestess, that name made me perfectly happy. Long has been my consecration; may I not meet those I hold dear at the altar? How would I pile up the votive offerings, and crowd the fires with incense! Life might be full and fair; for, in my own way, I could live for my friends." * *

"*Dec.* 8, 1840.—My book of amusement has been the 'Evenings of St. Petersburg.' I do not find the praises bestowed on it at all exaggerated. Yet De Maistre is too logical for me. I only catch a thought here and there along the page. There is a grandeur even in the subtlety of his mind. He walks with a step so still, that, but for his dignity, it would be stealthy, yet with brow erect and wide, eye grave and deep. He is a man such as I have never known before." * *

"I went to see Mrs. Wood in the Sonnambula. Nothing could spoil this opera, which expresses an ecstasy, a trance of feeling, better than anything

I ever heard. I have loved every melody in it for years, and it was happiness to listen to the exquisite modulations as they flowed out of one another, endless ripples on a river deep, wide, and strewed with blossoms. I never have known any one more to be loved than Bellini. No wonder the Italians make pilgrimages to his grave. In him thought and feeling flow always in one tide; he never divides himself. He is as melancholy as he is sweet; yet his melancholy is not impassioned, but purely tender."

"*Dec.* 15, 1840.—I have not time to write out as I should this sweet story of Melissa, but here is the outline:—

"More than four years ago she received an injury, which caused her great pain in the spine, and went to the next country town to get medical advice. She stopped at the house of a poor blacksmith, an acquaintance only, and has never since been able to be moved. Her mother and sister come by turns to take care of her. She cannot help herself in any way, but is as completely dependent as an infant. The blacksmith and his wife gave her the best room in their house, have ever since ministered to her as to a child of

their own; an dwhen people pity them for having to bear such a burthen, they say, ' It is none, but a blessing.'

" Melissa suffers all the time, and great pain. She cannot amuse or employ herself in any way; and all these years has been as dependent on others for new thoughts, as for daily cares. Yet her mind has deepened, and her character refined, under those stern teachers, Pain and Gratitude, till she has become the patron saint of the village, and the muse of the village schoolmistress. She has a peculiar aversion to egotism, and could not bear to have her mother enlarge upon her sufferings.

" ' Perhaps it will pain the lady to hear that,' said the mild, religious sufferer, who had borne all without a complaint.

" ' Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.' The poor are the generous; the injured, the patient and loving.

" All that —— said of this girl was in perfect harmony with what De Maistre says of the saint of St. Petersburg, who, almost devoured by cancer, when asked, ' Quelle est la première grâce que vous demanderez à Dieu, ma chère enfant, lorsque

vous serez devant lui?' she replied, 'Je lui demanderai pour mes bienfaiteurs la grâce de l'aimer autant que je l'aime.' When they were lamenting for her, 'Je ne suis pas, dit-elle, aussi malheureuse que vous le croyez; Dieu me fait la grâce de ne penser qu'à lui.'" * *

"Next, of Edith. Tall, gaunt, hard-favoured, was this candidate for the American calendar; but Bonifacia might be her name. From her earliest years she had valued all she knew, only as she was to teach it again. Her highest ambition was to be the schoolmistress; her recreation to dress the little ragged things, and take care of them out of school hours. She had some taste for nursing the grown-up, but this was quite subordinate to her care of the buds of the forest. Pure, perfectly beneficent, lived Edith, and never thought of any thing or person, but for its own sake. When she had attained midway the hill of life, she happened to be boarding in the house with a young farmer, who was lost in admiration of her lore. How he wished he, too, could read! 'What, can't you read? O, let me teach you!'—'You never can; I was too thick-skulled to learn, even at school. I am sure I never could now.' But Edith was not

to be daunted by any fancies of incapacity, and set to work with utmost zeal to teach this great grown man the primer. She succeeded, and won his heart thereby. He wished to requite the raising him from the night of ignorance, as Howard and Nicholas Poussin did the kind ones who raised them from the night of the tomb, by the gift of his hand. Edith consented, on condition that she might still keep school. So he had his sister come to 'keep things straight.' Edith and he go out in the morning,—he to his field, she to her school, and meet again at eventide, to talk, and plan, and, I hope, to read also.

"The first use Edith made of her accession of property, through her wedded estate, was to give away all she thought superfluous to a poor family she had long pitied, and to invite a poor sick woman to her 'spare chamber.' Notwithstanding a course like this, her husband has grown rich, and proves that the pattern of the widow's cruse was not lost in Jewry.

"Edith has become the Natalia of the village, as is Melissa its Schöne Seele.'"

"*Dec.* 22, 1840.—'Community' seems dwindling to a point, and I fancy the best use of the

plan, as projected thus far, will prove the good talks it has caused here, upon principles. I feel and find great want of wisdom in myself and the others. We are not ripe to reconstruct society yet. O Christopher Columbus! how art thou to be admired, when we see how other men go to work with their lesser enterprises! —— knows deepest what he wants, but not well how to get it. —— has a better conception of means, and less insight as to principles; but this movement has done him a world of good. All should say, however, that they consider this plan as a mere experiment, and are willing to fail. I tell them that they are not ready till they can say that. —— says he can bear to be treated unjustly by all concerned,—which is much. He is too sanguine, as it appears to me; but his aim is worthy; and, with his courage and clear intellect, his experiment will not, at least to him, be a failure."

"*Feb.* 19, 1841.—Have I never yet seen so much as *one* of my spiritual family? The other night they sat round me, so many who have thought they loved, or who begin to love me. I felt myself kindling the same fire in all their souls. I looked on each, and no eye repelled me. Yet

there was no warmth for me on all those altars. Their natures seemed deep, yet there was not one from which I could draw the living fountain. I could only cheat the hour with them, prize, admire, and pity. It was sad; yet who would have seen sadness in me? * *

" Once I was almost all intellect; now I am almost all feeling. Nature vindicates her rights, and I feel all Italy glowing beneath the Saxon crust. This cannot last long; I shall burn to ashes if all this smoulders here much longer. I must die if I do not burst forth in genius or heroism.

" I meant to have translated the best passages of ' Die Gunderode,'—which I prefer to Bettine's correspondence with Goethe. The two girls are equal natures, and both in earnest. Goethe made a puppet-show, for his private entertainment, of Bettine's life, and we wonder she did not feel he was not worthy of her homage. Gunderode is to me dear and admirable, Bettine only interesting. Gunderode is of religious grace, Bettine the fullness of instinctive impulse; Gunderode is the ideal, Bettine nature; Gunderode throws herself into the river because the world is all too narrow, Bettine lives and follows out every freakish fancy, till the enchanting child degenerates into an

eccentric and undignified old woman. There is a medium somewhere. Philip Sidney found it; others had it found them by fate."

"*March* 29, 1841.—* * Others have looked at society with far deeper consideration than I. I have felt so unrelated to this sphere, that it has not been hard for me to be true. Also, I do not believe in society. I feel that every man must struggle with these enormous ills, in some way, in every age; in that of Moses, or Plato, or Angelo, as in our own. So it has not moved me much to see my time so corrupt, but it would if I were in a false position.

"—— went out to his farm yesterday, full of cheer, as one who doeth a deed with sincere good will. He has shown a steadfastness and earnestness of purpose most grateful to behold. I do not know what their scheme will ripen to; at present it does not deeply engage my hopes. It is thus far only a little better way than others. I doubt if they will get free from all they deprecate in society."

"*Paradise Farm, Newport, July,* 1841.—Here are no deep forests, no stern mountains, nor narrow, sacred valleys; but the little white farmhouse looks down from its gentle slope on the boundless sea, and beneath the moon, beyond the

glistening corn-fields, is heard the endless surge. All around the house is most gentle and friendly, with many common flowers, that seem to have planted themselves, and the domestic honeysuckle carefully trained over the little window. Around are all the common farm-house sounds, — the poultry making a pleasant recitative between the carols of singing birds; even geese and turkeys are not inharmonious when modulated by the diapasons of the beach. The orchard of very old apple-trees, whose twisted forms tell of the glorious winds that have here held revelry, protects a little homely garden, such as gives to me an indescribable refreshment, where the undivided vegetable plots and flourishing young fruit-trees, mingling carelessly, seem as if man had dropt the seeds just where he wanted the plants, and they had sprung up at once. The family, too, look, at first glance, well-suited to the place,— homely, kindly, unoppressed, of honest pride and mutual love, not unworthy to look out upon the far-shining sea.

* * " Many, many sweet little things would I tell you, only they are so very little. I feel just now as if I could live and die here. I am out in

the open air all the time, except about two hours in the early morning. And now the moon is fairly gone late in the evening. While she was here, we stayed out, too. Everything seems sweet here, so homely, so kindly; the old people chatting so contentedly, the young men and girls laughing together in the fields,—not vulgarly, but in the true kinsfolk way,—little children singing in the house and beneath the berry-bushes. The never-ceasing break of the surf is a continual symphony, calming the spirits which this delicious air might else exalt too much. Everything on the beach becomes a picture; the casting the seine, the ploughing the deep for sea-weed. This, when they do it with horses, is prettiest of all; but when you see the oxen in the surf, you lose all faith in the story of Europa, as the gay waves tumble in on their lazy sides. The bull would be a fine object on the shore, but not, not in the water. Nothing short of a dolphin will do! Late to-night, from the highest Paradise rocks, seeing —— wandering, and the horsemen careering on the beach, so spectrally passing into nature, amid the pale, brooding twilight, I almost thought myself in the land of souls!

"But in the morning it is life, all cordial and common. This half-fisherman, half-farmer life seems very favourable to manliness. I like to talk with the fishermen; they are not boorish, not limited, but keen-eyed, and of a certain rude gentleness. Two or three days ago I saw the sweetest picture. There is a very tall rock, one of the natural pulpits, at one end of the beech. As I approached, I beheld a young fisherman with his little girl; he had nestled her into a hollow of the rock, and was standing before her, with his arms round her, and looking up in her face. Never was anything so pretty. I stood and stared, country fashion; and presently he scrambled up to the very top with her in his arms. She screamed a little as they went, but when they were fairly up on the crest of the rock, she chuckled, and stretched her tiny hand over his neck, to go still further. Yet, when she found he did not wish it, she leaned against his shoulder, and he sat, feeling himself in the child like that exquisite Madonna, and looking out over the great sea. Surely, the 'kindred points of heaven and home' were known in his breast, whatever guise they might assume.

"The sea is not always lovely and bounteous, though generally, since we have been here, she has beamed her bluest. The night of the full moon we stayed out on the far rocks. The afternoon was fair; the sun set nobly, wrapt in a violet mantle, which he left to the moon, in parting. She not only rose red, lowering, and of impatient attitude, but kept hiding her head all the evening with an angry, struggling movement. —— said, 'This is not Dian;' and I replied, 'No; now we see the Hecate.' But the damp, cold wind came sobbing, and the waves began wailing, too, till I was seized with a feeling of terror, such as I never had before, even in the darkest, and most treacherous, rustling wood. The moon seemed sternly to give me up to the dæmons of the rock, and the waves to mourn a tragic chorus, till I felt their cold grasp. I suffered so much, that I feared we should never get home without some fatal catastrophe. Never was I more relieved than when, as we came up the hill, the moon suddenly shone forth. It was ten o'clock, and here every human sound is hushed and lamp put out at that hour. How tenderly the grapes and tall corn-ears glistened and nodded! and the

trees stretched out their friendly arms, and the scent of every humblest herb was like a word of love. The waves, also, at that moment put on a silvery gleam, and looked most soft and regretful. That was a real voice from nature."

"*February*, 1842.—I am deeply sad at the loss of little Waldo, from whom I hoped more than from almost any living being. I cannot yet reconcile myself to the thought that the sun shines upon the grave of the beautiful blue-eyed boy, and I shall see him no more.

"Five years he was an angel to us, and I know not that any person was ever more the theme of thought to me. As I walk the streets they swarm with apparently worthless lives, and the question will rise, why he, why just he, who 'bore within himself the golden future,' must be torn away? His father will meet him again; but to me he seems lost, and yet that is weakness. I *must* meet that which he represented, since I so truly loved it. He was the only child I ever saw, that I sometimes wished I could have called mine.

"I loved him more than any child I ever knew, as he was of nature more fair and noble. You would be surprised to know how dear he was to

my imagination. I saw him but little, and it was well; for it is unwise to bind the heart where there is no claim. But it is all gone, and is another of the lessons brought by each year, that we are to expect suggestions only, and not fulfilments, from each form of beauty, and to regard them merely as Angels of The Beauty."

"*June*, 1842.—Why must children be with perfect people, any more than people wait to be perfect to be friends? The secret is,—is it not?—for parents to feel and be willing their children should know that they are but little older than themselves; only a class above, and able to give them some help in learning their lesson. Then parent and child keep growing together, in the same house. Let them blunder as we blundered. God is patient for us; why should not we be for them? Aspiration teaches always, and God leads, by inches. A perfect being would hurt a child no less than an imperfect."

" It always makes my annoyances seem light, to be riding about to visit these fine houses. Not that I am intolerant towards the rich, but I cannot help feeling at such times how much characters require the discipline of difficult circum-

stances. To say nothing of the need the soul has of a peace and courage that cannot be disturbed, even as to the intellect, how can one be sure of not sitting down in the midst of indulgence to pamper tastes alone? and how easy to cheat one's-self with the fancy that a little easy reading or writing is quite work. I am safer; I do not sleep on roses. I smile to myself, when with these friends, at their care of me. I let them do as they will, for I know it will not last long enough to spoil me."

"I take great pleasure in talking with aunt Mary.* Her strong and simple nature checks not, falters not. Her experience is entirely unlike mine, as, indeed, is that of most others whom I know. No rapture, no subtle process, no slow fermentation in the unknown depths, but a rill struck out from the rock, clear and cool in all its course,—the still, small voice. She says the guide of her life has shown itself rather as a restraining, than an impelling principle. I like her life, too, as far as I see it; it is dignified and true."

"*Cambridge, July,* 1842.—A letter at Providence would have been like manna in the

* Miss Rotch, of New Bedford.

wilderness. I came into the very midst of the fuss,* and, tedious as it was at the time, I am glad to have seen it. I shall in future be able to believe real, what I have read with a dim disbelief of such times and tendencies. There is, indeed, little good, little cheer, in what I have seen: a city full of grown-up people as wild, as mischief-seeking, as full of prejudice, careless slander, and exaggeration, as a herd of boys in the play-ground of the worst boarding-school. Women whom I have seen, as the domestic cat, gentle, graceful, cajoling, suddenly showing the disposition, if not the force, of the tigress. I thought I appreciated the monstrous growths of rumour before, but I never did. The Latin poet, though used to a court, has faintly described what I saw and heard often, in going the length of a street. It is astonishing what force, purity and wisdom it requires for a human being to keep clear of falsehoods. These absurdities, of course, are linked with good qualities, with energy of feeling, and with a love of morality, though narrowed and vulgarized by the absence of the intelligence which should enlighten. I had the good discipline

* The Dorr rebellion.

of trying to make allowance for those making none, to be charitable to their want of charity, and cool without being cold. But I don't know when I have felt such an aversion to my environment, and prayed so earnestly day by day,—'O Eternal! purge from my inmost heart this hot haste about ephemeral trifles,' and 'keep back thy servant from presumptuons sins; let them not have dominion over me.'

"What a change from the almost vestal quiet of 'Aunt Mary's' life, to all this open-windowed, open-eyed screaming of 'poltroon,' 'nefarious plan,' 'entire depravity,' &c. &c."

"*July*, 1842. *Boston.*—I have been entertaining the girls here with my old experiences at Groton. They have been very fresh in my mind this week. Had I but been as wise in such matters then as now, how easy and fair I might have made the whole! Too late, too late to live, but not too late to think! And as that maxim of the wise Oriental teaches, 'the acts of this life shall be the fate of the next.'"

* * * "I would have my friends tender of me, not because I am frail, but because I am capable of strength;—patient, because they see in me a

principle that must, at last, harmonize all the exuberance of my character. I did not well understand what you felt, but I am willing to admit that what you said of my 'over-great impetuosity' is just. You will, perhaps, feel it more and more. It may at times hide my better self. When it does, speak, I entreat, as harshly as you feel. Let me be always sure I know the worst. I believe you will be thus just, thus true, for we are both servants of Truth."

"*August*, 1842. *Cambridge*.—Few have eyes for the pretty little features of a scene. In this, men are not so good as boys. Artists are always thus young; poets are; but the pilgrim does not lay aside his belt of steel, nor the merchant his pack, to worship the flowers on the fountain's brink. I feel, like Herbert, the weight of 'business to be done,' but the bird-like particle would skim and sing at these sweet places. It seems strange to leave them; and that we do so, while so fitted to live deeply in them, shows that beauty is the end but not the means.

"I have just been reading the new poems of Tennyson. Much has he thought, much suffered, since the first ecstasy of so fine an organization

clothed all the world with rosy light. He has not suffered himself to become a mere intellectual voluptuary, nor the songster of fancy and passion, but has earnestly revolved the problems of life, and his conclusions are calmly noble. In these later verses is a still deep sweetness; how different from the intoxicating, sensuous melody of his earlier cadence! I have loved him much this time, and taken him to heart as a brother. One of his themes has long been my favourite,—the last expedition of Ulysses,—and his, like mine, is the Ulysses of the Odyssey, with his deep romance of wisdom, and not the worldling of the Iliad. How finely marked his slight description of himself and of Telemachus! In Dora, Locksley Hall, the Two Voices, Morte d'Arthur, I find my own life, much of it, written truly out."

"*Concord, August* 25, 1842.—Beneath this roof of peace, beneficence, and intellectual activity, I find just the alternation of repose and satisfying pleasure that I need.* * *

"Do not find fault with the hermits and scholars. The true text is:—

> "Mine own Telemachus
> He does his work—I mine."

All do the work, whether they will or no; but he is 'mine own Telemachus,' who does it in the spirit of religion, never believing that the last results can be arrested in any one measure or set of measures, listening always to the voice of the Spirit,—and who does this more than —— ?

"After the first excitement of intimacy with him,—when I was made so happy by his high tendency, absolute purity, the freedom and infinite graces of an intellect cultivated much beyond any I had known,—came with me the questioning season. I was greatly disappointed in my relation to him. I was, indeed, always called on to be worthy,—this benefit was sure in our friendship. But I found no intelligence of my best self; far less was it revealed to me in new modes; for not only did he seem to want the living faith which enables one to discharge this holiest office of a friend, but he absolutely distrusted me in every region of my life with which he was unacquainted. The same trait I detected in his relations with others. He had faith in the Universal, but not in the Individual Man; he met men, not as a brother, but as a critic. Philosophy appeared to chill instead of exalting the poet.

"But now I am better acquainted with him. His 'accept' is true; the 'I shall learn,' with which he answers every accusation, is no less true. No one can feel his limitations, in fact, more than he, though he always speaks confidently from his present knowledge as all he has yet, and never qualifies or explains. He feels himself 'shut up in a crystal cell,' from which only 'a great love or a great task could release me,' and hardly expects either from what remains in this life. But I already see so well how these limitations have fitted him for his peculiar work, that I can no longer quarrel with them; while from his eyes looks out the angel that must sooner or later break every chain. Leave him in his cell affirming absolute truth; protesting against humanity, if so he appears to do; the calm observer of the courses of things. Surely, 'he keeps true to his thought, which is the great matter.' He has already paid his debt to his time; how much more he will give we cannot know; but already I feel how invaluable is a cool mind, like his, amid the warring elements around us. As I look at him more by his own law, I understand him better; and as I understand him better, differ-

ences melt away. My inmost heart blesses the fate that gave me birth in the same clime and time, and that has drawn me into such a close bond with him as, it is my hopeful faith, will never be broken, but from sphere to sphere ever more hallowed. * * *

"What did you mean by saying I had imbibed much of his way of thought? I do indeed feel his life stealing gradually into mine; and I sometimes think that my work would have been more simple, and my unfolding to a temporal activity more rapid and easy, if we had never met. But when I look forward to eternal growth, I am always aware that I am far larger and deeper for him. His influence has been to me that of lofty assurance and sweet serenity. He says, I come to him as the European to the Hindoo, or the gay Trouvère to the Puritan in his steeple hat. Of course this implies that our meeting is partial. I present to him the many forms of nature, and solicit with music; he melts them all into spirit, and reproves performance with prayer. When I am with God alone, I adore in silence. With nature I am filled and grow only. With most men I bring words of now past life, and do

actions suggested by the wants of their natures rather than my own. But he stops me from doing anything, and makes me think."

"*October*, 1842. * * To me, individually, Dr. Channing's kindness was great; his trust and esteem were steady, though limited, and I owe him a large debt of gratitude.

"His private character was gentle, simple, and perfectly harmonious, though somewhat rigid and restricted in its operations. It was easy to love, and a happiness to know him, though never, I think, a source of the highest social pleasure to be with him. His department was ethics; and, as a literary companion, he did not throw himself heartily into the works of creative genius, but looked, wherever he read, for a moral. In criticism he was deficient in 'individuality,' if by that the phrenologists mean the power of seizing on the peculiar meanings of special forms. I have heard it said, that, under changed conditions, he might have been a poet. He had, indeed, the poetic sense of a creative spirit working everywhere. Man and nature were living to him; and though he did not yield to sentiment in particulars, he did in universals. But his mind was not recreative, or even representative.

"He was deeply interesting to me as having so true a respect for woman. This feeling in him was not chivalrous; it was not the sentiment of an artist; it was not the affectionateness of the common son of Adam, who knows that only her presence can mitigate his loneliness; but it was a religious reverence. To him she was a soul with an immortal destiny. Nor was there at the bottom of his heart one grain of masculine assumption. He did not wish that Man should protect her, but that God should protect her, and teach her the meaning of her lot.

"In his public relations he is to be regarded not only as a check upon the evil tendencies of his era, but yet more as a prophet of a better age already dawning as he leaves us. In his later days he filled yet another office, of taking the middle ground between parties. Here he was a fairer figure than ever before. His morning prayer was, 'Give me more light; keep my soul open to the light;' and it was answered. He steered his middle course with sails spotless and untorn. He was preserved in a wonderful degree, from the prejudices of his own past, the passions of the present, and the exaggerations of those who look forward to the future. In the writings where,

after long and patient survey, he sums up the evidence on both sides, and stands umpire, with the judicial authority of a pure intent, a steadfast patience, and a long experience, the mild wisdom of age is beautifully tempered by the ingenuous sweetness of youth. These pieces resemble charges to a jury; they have always been heard with affectionate deference, if not with assent, and have exerted a purifying influence." * *

"*November*, 1842.—When souls meet direct, and all secret thoughts are laid open, we shall need no forbearance, no prevention, no care-taking of any kind. Love will be pure light, and each action simple—too simple to be noble. But there will not be always so much to pardon in ourselves and others. Yesterday we had at my class a conversation on Faith. Deeply true things were said and felt. But to-day the virtue has gone out of me; I have accepted all, and yet there will come these hours of weariness, — weariness of human nature in myself and others. 'Could ye not watch one hour?' Not one faithfully through! * * To speak with open heart, and 'tongue affectionate and true,'—to enjoy real repose, and the consciousness of a thorough mutual

understanding in the presence of friends when we do meet, is what is needed. That being granted, I do believe I should not wish any surrender of time or thought from a human being. But I have always a sense that I cannot meet or be met *in haste;* as —— said he could not look at the works of art in a chance half-hour, so cannot I thus rudely and hastily turn over the leaves of any mind. In peace, in stillness that permits the soul to flow, beneath the open sky, I would see those I love."

VIII.—SOCIALISM.

In the preceding extracts will have been noticed frequent reference to the Association Movement, which, during the winter of 1840-41, was beginning to appear simultaneously at several points in New England. In Boston and its vicinity several friends, for whose characters Margaret felt the highest honour, and with many of whose views, theoretic and practical, she accorded, were earnestly considering the possibility of making such industrial, social, and educational arrangements, as would simplify economies, combine leisure for study with healthful and honest toil, avert unjust collisions of caste, equalize refinements, awaken

generous affections, diffuse courtesy, and sweeten and sanctify life as a whole. Chief among these was the Rev. George Ripley, who, convinced by his experience in a faithful ministry, that the need was urgent for a thorough application of the professed principles of Fraternity to actual relations, was about staking his all of fortune, reputation, position, and influence, in an attempt to organize a joint-stock community at Brook Farm. How Margaret was inclined to regard this movement has been already indicated. While at heart sympathising with the heroism that prompted it, in judgment she considered it premature. But, true to her noble self, though regretting the seemingly gratuitous sacrifice of her friends, she gave them without stint the cheer of her encouragement, and the light of her counsel. She visited them often; entering genially into their trials and pleasures, and missing no chance to drop good seed in every furrow upturned by the ploughshare or softened by the rain. In the secluded yet intensely animated circle of these co-workers I frequently met her, during several succeeding years, and rejoice to bear testimony to the justice, magnanimity, wisdom, patience, and

many-sided goodwill, that governed her every thought and deed. The feelings with which she watched the progress of this experiment are thus exhibited in her journals:—

"My hopes might lead to Association, too,—an association, if not of efforts, yet of destinies. In such an one I live with several already, feeling that each one, by acting out his own, casts light upon a mutual destiny, and illustrates the thought of a master mind. It is a constellation, not a phalanx, to which I would belong."

"Why bind oneself to a central or any doctrine? How much nobler stands a man entirely unpledged, unbound! Association may be the great experiment of the age, still it is only an experiment. It is not worth while to lay such stress on it; let us try it, induce others to try it, —that is enough."

"It is amusing to see how the solitary characters tend to outwardness,—to association,—while the social and sympathetic ones emphasize the value of solitude,—of concentration,—so that we hear from each the word which, from his structure, we least expect."

"On Friday I came to Brook Farm. The first day or two here is desolate. You seem to belong to nobody, —to have a right to speak to nobody; but very soon you learn to take care of yourself, and then the freedom of the place is delightful.

"It is fine to see how thoroughly Mr. and Mrs. R. act out, in their own persons, what they intend.

"All Saturday I was off in the woods. In the evening we had a general conversation, opened by me, upon Education, in its largest sense, and on what we can do for ourselves and others. I took my usual ground: The aim is perfection; patience the road. The present object is to give ourselves and others a tolerable chance. Let us not be too ambitious in our hopes as to immediate results. Our lives should be considered as a tendency, an approximation only. Parents and teachers expect to do too much. They are not legislators, but only interpreters to the next generation. Soon, very soon, does the parent become merely the elder brother of his child;—a little wiser, it is to be hoped. ——— differed from me as to some things I said about the gradations of

experience,—that 'to be brought prematurely near perfect beings would chill and discourage.' He thought it would cheer and console. He spoke well,—with a youthful nobleness. ——— said 'that the most perfect person would be the most impersonal'—philosophical bull that, I trow—'and, consequently, would impede us least from God.' Mr. R. spoke admirably on the nature of loyalty. The people showed a good deal of the *sans-culotte* tendency in their manners,—throwing themselves on the floor, yawning, and going out when they had heard enough. Yet, as the majority differ from me, to begin with,—that being the reason this subject was chosen,—they showed, on the whole, more respect and interest than I had expected. As I am accustomed to deference, however, and need it for the boldness and animation which my part requires, I did not speak with as much force as usual. Still, I should like to have to face all this; it would have the same good effects that the Athenian assemblies had on the minds obliged to encounter them.

" Sunday. A glorious day;—the woods full of perfume. I was out all the morning. In the afternoon, Mrs. R. and I had a talk. I said my

position would be too uncertain here, as I could not work. ——— said:—'They would all like to work for a person of genius. They would not like to have this service claimed from them, but would like to render it of their own accord.' 'Yes,' I told her; 'but where would be my repose, when they were always to be judging whether I was worth it or not. It would be the same position the clergyman is in, or the wandering beggar with his harp. Each day you must prove yourself anew. You are not in immediate relations with material things.'

"We talked of the principles of the community. I said I had not a right to come, because all the confidence in it I had was as an *experiment* worth trying, and that it was a part of the great wave of inspired thought. ——— declared they none of them had confidence beyond this; but they seem to me to have. Then I said, 'that though I entirely agreed about the dignity of labour, and had always wished for the present change, yet I did not agree with the principle of paying for services by time;* neither did I believe in the hope of excluding evil, for that was a growth of

* This was a transitional arrangement only.

nature, and one condition of the development of good.' We had valuable discussion on these points.

" All Monday morning in the woods again. Afternoon, out with the drawing party; I felt the evils of want of conventional refinement, in the impudence with which one of the girls treated me. She has since thought of it with regret, I notice; and, by every day's observation of me, will see that she ought not to have done it."

" In the evening, a husking in the barn. Men, women, and children, all engaged. It was a most picturesque scene, only not quite light enough to bring it out fully. I stayed and helped about half an hour, then took a long walk beneath the stars."

" Wednesday. I have been too much absorbed to-day by others, and it has made me almost sick. Mrs. ——— came to see me, and we had an excellent talk, which occupied nearly all the morning. Then Mrs. ——— wanted to see me, but after a few minutes I found I could not bear it, and lay down to rest. Then ——— came. Poor man;— his feelings and work are wearing on him. He looks really ill now. Then ——— and I went to walk in the woods. I was deeply interested in all she told me. If I were to write down all she and

four other married women have confided to me, these three days past, it would make a cento, on one subject, in five parts. Certainly there should be some great design in my life; its attractions are so invariable."

"In the evening, a conversation on Impulse. The reason for choosing this subject is the great tendency here to advocate spontaneousness, at the expense of reflection. It was a much better conversation than the one before. None yawned, for none came, this time, from mere curiosity. There were about thirty-five present, which is a large enough circle. Many engaged in the talk. I defended nature, as I always do;—the spirit ascending through, not superseding, nature. But in the scale of Sense, Intellect, Spirit, I advocated to-night the claims of Intellect, because those present were rather disposed to postpone them. On the nature of Beauty we had good talk. —— spoke well. She seemed in a much more reverent humour than the other night, and enjoyed the large plans of the universe which were unrolled. ——, seated on the floor, with the light falling from behind on his long gold locks, made, with sweet, serene aspect, and composed tones, a good exposé of his way of viewing things."

"Saturday. Well, good-bye, Brook Farm. I know more about this place than I did when I came; but the only way to be qualified for a judge of such an experiment would be to become an active, though unimpassioned, associate in trying it. Some good things are proven, and as for individuals, they are gainers. Has not —— vied, in her deeds of love, with 'my Cid,' and the holy Ottilia. That girl who was so rude to me stood waiting, with a timid air, to bid me good-bye. Truly, the soft answer turneth away wrath.

"I have found myself here in the amusing position of a conservative. Even so is it with Mr. R. There are too many young people in proportion to the others. I heard myself saying, with a grave air, 'Play out the play, gentles." Thus, from generation to generation, rises and falls the wave."

Again, a year afterward, she writes:—

"Here I have passed a very pleasant week. The tone of the society is much sweeter than when I was here a year ago. There is a pervading spirit of mutual tolerance and gentleness, with great sincerity. There is no longer a passion for grotesque freaks of liberty, but a disposition,

rather, to study and enjoy the liberty of law. The great development of mind and character observable in several instances, persuades me that this state of things affords a fine studio for the soul-sculptor. To a casual observer it may seem as if there was not enough of character here to interest, because there are no figures sufficiently distinguished to be worth painting for the crowd; but there is enough of individuality in free play to yield instruction; and one might have, from a few months' residence here, enough of the human drama to feed thought for a long time."

Thus much for Margaret's impressions of Brook Farm and its inmates. What influence she in turn exerted on those she met there, may be seen from the following affectionate tribute offered by one of the young girls alluded to in the journal:—

"Would that I might aid, even slightly, in doing justice to the nolbe-hearted woman whose departure we must all mourn. But I feel myself wholly powerless to do so; and after I explain what my relation to her was, you will understand

how this can be, without holding me indolent or unsympathetic.

"When I first met Miss Fuller, I had already cut from my moorings, and was sailing on the broad sea of experience, conscious that I possessed unusual powers of endurance, and that I should meet with sufficient to test their strength. She made no offer of guidance, and once or twice, in the succeeding year, alluded to the fact that she 'had never helped me.' This was in a particular sense, of course, for she helped all who knew her. She was interested in my rough history, but could not be intimate, in any just sense, with a soul so unbalanced, so inharmonious as mine then was. For my part, I reverenced her. She was to me the embodiment of wisdom and tenderness. I heard her converse, and, in the rich and varied intonations of her voice, I recognised a being to whom every shade of sentiment was familiar. She knew, if not by experience then by no questionable intuition, how to interpret the inner life of every man and woman; and, by interpreting, she could soothe and strengthen. To her, psychology was an open book. When she came to Brook Farm, it was my delight to wait on one so worthy of all

service,—to arrange her late breakfast in some remnants of ancient China, and to save her, if it might be, some little fatigue or annoyance, during each day. After a while she seemed to lose sight of my more prominent and disagreeable peculiarities, and treated me with affectionate regard."

Being a confirmed Socialist, I often had occasion to discuss with Margaret the problems involved in the "Combined Order" of life; and though unmoved by her scepticism, I could not but admire the sagacity, foresight, comprehensiveness, and catholic sympathy with which she surveyed this complicated subject. Her objections, to be sure, were of the usual kind, and turned mainly upon two points,—the difficulty of so allying labour and capital as to secure the hoped-for cooperation, and the danger of merging the individual in the mass to such degree as to paralyse energy, heroism, and genius; but these objections were urged in a way that brought out her originality and generous hopes. There was nothing abject, timid, or conventional in her doubts. The end sought she prized; but the means she questioned. Though pleased in listening to sanguine visions of the future, she

was slow to credit that an organization by "Groups and Series" would yield due incentive for personal development, while ensuring equilibrium through exact and universal justice. She felt, too, that Society was not a machine to be put together and set in motion, but a living body, whose breath must be Divine inspiration, and whose healthful growth is only hindered by forcing. Finally, while longing as earnestly as any Socialist for "Liberty and Law made one in living union," and assured in faith that an era was coming of "Attractive Industry" and "Harmony," she was still for herself inclined to seek sovereign independence in comparative isolation. Indeed, at this period, Margaret was in spirit and in thought preeminently a Transcendentalist.

IX.—CREDO.

In regard to Transcendentalism, again, there was reason to rejoice in having found a friend so firm to keep her own ground, while so liberal to comprehend another's stand-point, as was Margaret. She knew, not only theoretically, but practically, how endless are the diversities of human character and of Divine discipline, and she

reverenced fellow-spirits too sincerely ever to wish to warp them to her will, or to repress their normal development. She was stern but in one claim, that each should be faithful to apparent leadings of the Truth; and could avow widest differences of conviction without feeling that love was thereby chilled, or the hand withheld from cordial aid. Especially did she render service by enabling one,—through her blended insight, candour, and clearness of understanding,—to see in bright reflection his own mental state.

It would be doing injustice to a person like Margaret, always more enthusiastic than philosophical, to attribute to her anything like a system of theology; for, hopeful, reverent, aspiring, and free from scepticism, she felt too profoundly the vastness of the universe and of destiny ever to presume that with her span rule she could measure the Infinite. Yet the tendency of her thoughts can readily be traced in the following passages from note-books and letters:—

"When others say to me, and not without apparent ground, that 'the Outward Church is a folly which keeps men from enjoying the com-

munion of the Church Invisible, and that in the desire to be helped by, and to help others, men lose sight of the only sufficient help, which they might find by faithful solitary intentness of spirit,' I answer, It is true, and the present deadness and emptiness summon us to turn our thoughts in that direction. Being now without any positive form of religion, any unattractive symbols, or mysterious rites, we are in the less danger of stopping at surfaces, of accepting a mediator instead of the Father, a sacrament instead of the Holy Ghost. And when I see how little there is to impede and bewilder us, I cannot but accept,—should it be for many years,—the forlornness, the want of fit expression, the darkness as to what is to be expressed even, that characterise our time.

"But I do not, therefore, as some of our friends do, believe that it will always be so, and that the Church is tottering to its grave, never to rise again. The Church was the growth of human nature, and it is so still. It is but one result of the impulse which makes two friends clasp one another's hands, look into one another's eyes at sight of beauty, or the utterance of a feeling of piety. So soon as the Spirit has mourned and

sought, and waited long enough to open new depths, and has found something to express, there will again be a Cultus, a Church. The very people, who say that none is needed, make one at once. They talk with, they write to one another. They listen to music, they sustain themselves with the poets; they like that one voice should tell the thoughts of several minds, one gesture proclaim that the same life is at the same moment in many breasts.

"I am myself most happy in my lonely Sundays, and do not feel the need of any social worship, as I have not for several years, which I have passed in the same way. Sunday is to me priceless as a day of peace and solitary reflection. To all who will, it may be true, that, as Herbert says:—

> 'Sundays the pillars are
> On which Heaven's palace arched lies;
> The other days fill up the space
> And hollow room with vanities;'

and yet in no wise 'vanities,' when filtered by the Sunday crucible. After much troubling of the waters of my life, a radiant thought of the meaning and beauty of earthly existence will descend like a healing angel. The stillness permits me to hear a pure tone from the One in All. But

often I am not alone. The many now, whose hearts, panting for truth and love, have been made known to me, whose lives flow in the same direction as mine, and are enlightened by the same star, are with me. I am in church, the church invisible, undefiled by inadequate expression. Our communion is perfect; it is that of a common aspiration; and where two or three are gathered together in one region, whether in the flesh or the spirit, He will grant their request. Other communion would be a happiness,—to break together the bread of mutual thought, to drink the wine of loving life,—but it is not necessary.

"Yet I cannot but feel that the crowd of men whose pursuits are not intellectual, who are not brought by their daily walk into converse with sages and poets, who win their bread from an earth whose mysteries are not open to them, whose worldly intercourse is more likely to stifle than to encourage the sparks of love and faith in their breasts, need on that day quickening more than repose. The church is now rather a lecture-room than a place of worship; it should be a school for mutual instruction. I must rejoice

when any one, who lays spiritual things to heart, feels the call rather to mingle with men, than to retire and seek by himself.

"You speak of men going up to worship by 'households,' &c. Were the actual family the intellectual family, this might be; but as social life now is, how can it? Do we not constantly see the child, born in the flesh to one father, choose in the spirit another? No doubt this is wrong, since the sign does not stand for the thing signified, but it is one feature of the time. How will it end? Can families worship together till it does end?"

"I have let myself be cheated out of my Sunday by going to hear Mr.——. As he began by reading the first chapter of Isaiah, and the fourth of John's Epistle, I made mental comments with pure delight. 'Bring no more vain oblations.' 'Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.' 'We know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because he hath given us of the Spirit.' Then pealed the organ, full of solemn assurance. But straightway uprose the preacher to deny mysteries, to deny the second birth, to deny influx, and to renounce the sovereign gift of

insight, for the sake of what he deemed a '*rational*' exercise of will. As he spoke I could not choose but deny him all through, and could scarce refrain from rising to expound, in the light of my own faith, the words of those wiser Jews which had been read. Was it not a sin to exchange friendly greeting as we parted, and yet tell him no word of what was in my mind?

"Still I saw why he looked at things as he did. The old religionists did talk about 'grace, conversion,' and the like, technically, without striving to enter into the idea, till they quite lost sight of it. Undervaluing the intellect, they became slaves of a sect, instead of organs of the Spirit. This Unitarianism has had its place. There was a time for asserting 'the dignity of human nature,' and for explaining total depravity into temporary inadequacy,—a time to say that the truths of *essence*, if simplified at all in statement from their infinite variety of existence, should be spoken of as One, rather than Three, though that number, if they would only let it reproduce itself simply, is of highest significance. Yet the time seems now to have come for reinterpreting the old dogmas. For one I would now preach the Holy

Ghost as zealously as they have been preaching Man, and faith instead of the understanding, and mysticism instead, &c. But why go on? It certainly is by no means useless to preach. In my experience of the divine gifts of solitude, I had forgotten what might be done in this other way. That crowd of upturned faces, with their look of unintelligent complacency! Give tears and groans, rather, if there be a mixture of physical excitement and bigotry. Mr. —— is heard because, though he has not entered into the secret of piety, he wishes to be heard, and with a good purpose,—can make a forcible statement, and kindle himself with his own thoughts. How many persons must there be who cannot worship alone, since they are content with so little! Can none wake the spark that will melt them, till they take beautiful forms? Were one to come now, who could purge us with fire, how would these masses glow and be clarified!

"Mr. —— made a good suggestion:—'Such things could not be said in the open air.' Let men preach for the open air, and speak now thunder and lightning, now dew and rustling leaves. Yet must the preacher have the thought

of his day before he can be its voice. None have it yet; but some of our friends, perhaps, are nearer than the religious world at large, because neither ready to dogmatize, as if they had got it, nor content to stop short with mere impressions and presumptuous hopes. I feel that a great truth is coming. Sometimes it seems as if we should have it among us in a day. Many steps of the Temple have been ascended, steps of purest alabaster, and of shining jasper, also of rough-brick, and slippery moss-grown stone. We shall reach what we long for, since we trust and do not fear, for our God knows not fear, only reverence and his plan is All in All."

"Who can expect to utter an absolutely pure and clear tone on these high subjects? Our earthly atmosphere is too gross to permit it. Yet, a severe statement has rather an undue charm for me, as I have a nature of great emotion, which loves free abandonment. I am ready to welcome a descending Moses, come to turn all men from idolatries. For my priests have been very generally of the Pagan greatness, revering nature and seeking excellence, but in the path of progress, not of renunciation. The lyric inspira-

tions of the poet come very differently on the ear from the 'still, small voice.' They are, in fact, all one revelation; but one must be at the centre to interpret it. To that centre I have again and again been drawn, but my large natural life has been, as yet, put partially transfused with spiritual consciousness. I shun a premature narrowness, and bide my time. But I am drawn to look at natures who take a different way, because they seem to complete my being for me. They, too, tolerate me in my many phases for the same reason, probably. It pleased me to see, in one of the figures by which the Gnostics illustrated the progress of man, that Severity corresponded to Magnificence."

"In my quiet retreat, I read Xenophon, and became more acquainted with his Socrates. I had before known only the Socrates of Plato, one much more to my mind. Socrates conformed to the Greek Church, and it is evident with a sincere reverence, because it was the growth of the *national* mind. He thought best to stand on its platform and to illustrate, though with keen truth, by received forms. This was his right way, as his influence was naturally private, for individuals

who could in some degree respond to the teachings of his dæmon; he knew the multitude would not understand him. But it was the other way that Jesus took, preaching in the fields, and plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath."

"Is it my defect of spiritual experience, that while that weight of sagacity, which is the iron to the dart of genius, is needful to satisfy me, the undertone of another and a deeper knowledge does not please, does not command me? Even in Handel's Messiah, I am half incredulous, half impatient, when the sadness of the second part comes to check, before it interprets, the promise of the first; and the strain, 'Was ever sorrow like to his sorrow?' is not for me, as I have been, as I am. Yet Handel was worthy to speak of Christ. The great chorus, 'Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,' if understood in the large sense of every man his own Saviour, and Jesus only representative of the way all must walk to accomplish our destiny, is indeed a worthy gospel."

"Ever since —— told me how his feelings had

changed towards Jesus, I have wished much to write some sort of a Credo, out of my present state, but have had no time till last night. I have not satisfied myself in the least, and have written very hastily; yet, though not full enough to be true, this statement is nowhere false to me.

* * * "Whatever has been permitted by the law of being must be for good, and only in time not good. We trust, and are led forward by experience. Light gives experience of outward life, faith of inward life, and then we discern, however faintly, the necessary harmony of the two. The moment we have broken through an obstruction, not accidentally, but by the aid of faith, we begin to interpret the Universe, and to apprehend why evil is permitted. Evil is obstruction; Good is accomplishment.

"It would seem that the Divine Being designs through man to express distinctly what the other forms of nature only intimate, and that wherever man remains imbedded in nature, whether from sensuality or because he is not yet awakened to consciousness, the purpose of the whole remains unfulfilled. Hence our displeasure when Man is not in a sense above Nature. Yet, when he is not

so closely bound with all other manifestations, as duly to express their Spirit, we are also displeased. He must be at once the highest form of Nature, and conscious of the meaning she has been striving successively to unfold through those below him. Centuries pass; whole races of men are expended in the effort to produce one that shall realize this Ideal, and publish Spirit in the human form. Here and there is a degree of success. Life enough is lived through a man, to justify the great difficulties attendant on the existence of mankind. And then throughout all realms of thought vibrates the affirmation, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

"I do not mean to lay an undue stress upon the position and office of man, merely because I am of his race, and understand best the scope of his destiny. The history of the earth, the motions of the heavenly bodies, suggest already modes of being higher than ours, and which fulfil more deeply the office of interpretation. But I do suppose man's life to be the rivet in one series of the great chain, and that all higher existences are analogous to his. Music suggests their mode of being, and, when carried up on its strong wings,

we foresee how the next step in the soul's ascension shall interpret man to the universe, as he now interprets those forms beneath himself.

"The law of Spirit is identical, whether displaying itself as genius, or as piety, but its modes of expression are distinct dialects. All souls desire to become the fathers of souls, as citizens, legislators, poets, artists, sages, saints; and, so far as they are true to the law of their incorruptible essence, they are all Anointed, all Emmanuel, all Messiah; but they are all brutes and devils so far as subjected to the law of corruptible existence.

"As wherever there is a tendency a form is gradually evolved, as its Type,—so is it the law of each class and order of human thoughts to produce a form which shall be the visible representation of its aim and strivings, and stand before it as its King. This effort to produce a kingly type it was that clothed itself with power as Brahma or Osiris, that gave laws as Confucius or Moses, that embodied music and eloquence in the Apollo. This it was that incarnated itself, at one time as Plato, at another as Michel Angelo, at another as Luther, &c. Ever seeking, it has produced Ideal

after Ideal of the beauty into which mankind is capable of being developed; and one of the highest, in some respects the very highest, of these kingly types, was the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

"Few believe more in his history than myself, and it is very dear to me. I believe, in my own way, in the long preparation of ages for his coming, and the truth of prophecy that announced him. I see a necessity, in the character of Jesus, why Abraham should have been the founder of his nation, Moses its lawgiver, and David its king and poet. I believe in the genesis of the patriarchs, as given in the Old Testament. I believe in the prophets—that they foreknew not only what their nation longed for, but what the development of universal Man requires,—a Redeemer, an Atoner, a Lamb of God, taking away the sins of the world. I believe that Jesus came when the time was ripe, and that he was peculiarly a messenger and Son of God. I will not loathe sects, persuasions, systems, though I cannot abide in them one moment, for I see that by most men they are still needed. To them their banners, their tents; let them be Fire-worshippers, Platonists, Christians; let them live in the shadow of past revelations.

X.—SELF-SOVEREIGNTY.

To one studying the signs of the times, it was quite instructive to watch the moods of a mind so sensitive as Margaret's; for her delicate meter indicated in advance each coming change in the air-currents of thought. But I was chiefly interested in the processes whereby she was gaining harmony and unity. The more one studied her, the more plainly he saw that her peculiar power was the result of fresh, fervent, exhaustless and indomitable affections. The emotive force in her, indeed, was immense in volume, and most various in tendency; and it was wonderful to observe the outward equability of one inwardly so impassioned.

This was, in fact, the first problem to be solved in gaining real knowledge of her commanding character: "How did a person, by constitution so impetuous, become so habitually serene?" In temperament Margaret seemed a Bacchante,*

* This sentence was written before I was aware that Margaret, as will be seen hereafter, had used the same symbol to describe Madame Sand. The first impulse, of course, when I discovered this coincidence, was to strike out the above passage; yet, on second thought, I have retained it, as indicating an actual re-

prompt for wild excitement, and fearless to tread by night the mountain forest, with song and dance of delirious mirth; yet constantly she wore the laurel in token of purification, and, with water from fresh fountains, cleansed the statue of Minerva. Stagnancy and torpor were intolerable to her free and elastic impulses; a brilliant fancy threw over each place and incident Arcadian splendour; and eager desire, with energetic purposes, filled her with the consciousness of large latent life; and yet the lower instincts were duly subordinated to the higher, and dignified self-control ordered her deportment. Somehow, according to the doctrine of the wise Jacob Boehme, the fierce, hungry fire had met in embrace the meek, cool water, and was bringing to birth the pleasant light-flame of love. The transformation, though not perfected, was fairly begun.

Partly I could see how this change had been wrought. Ill health, pain, disappointment, care, had tamed her spirits. A wide range through the

semblance between these two grand women. In Margaret, however, the benediction of their noble-hearted sister, Elizabeth Barrett, had already been fulfilled; for she to "woman's claim" had ever joined "the angel-grace

"Of a pure genius sanctified from blame."

romantic literature of ancient and modern times had exalted while expending her passions. In the world of imagination, she had discharged the stormful energy which would have been destructive in actual life. And in thought she had bound herself to the mast while sailing past the Sirens. Through sympathy, also, from childhood, with the tragi-comedy of many lives around her, she had gained experience of the laws and limitations of providential order. Gradually, too, she had risen to higher planes of hope, whence opened wider prospects of destiny and duty. More than all, by that attraction of opposites which a strong will is most apt to feel, she had sought, as chosen companions, persons of scrupulous reserve, of modest coolness, and severe elevation of view. Finally, she had been taught, by a discipline specially fitted to her dispositions, to trust the leadings of the Divine Spirit. The result was, that at this period Margaret had become a Mystic. Her prisoned emotions found the freedom they pined for in contemplation of nature's exquisite harmonies,—in poetic regards of the glory that enspheres human existence, when seen as a whole from beyond the clouds,—and above all in exultant

consciousness of life ever influent from the All-Living.

A few passages from her papers will best illustrate this proneness to rapture.

"My tendency is, I presume, rather to a great natural, than to a deep religious life. But though others may be more conscientious and delicate, few have so steady a faith in Divine Love. I may be arrogant and impetuous, but I am never harsh and morbid. May there not be a mediation, rather than a conflict, between piety and genius? Greek and Jew, Italian and Saxon, are surely but leaves on one stem, at last."

"I am in danger of giving myself up to experiences till they so steep me in ideal passion that the desired goal is forgotten in the rich present. Yet I think I am learning how to use life more wisely."

"Forgive me, beautiful ones, who earlier learned the harmony of your beings,—with whom eye, voice, and hand are already true to the soul! Forgive me still some 'lispings and stammerings of the passionate age.' Teach me,—me also,—to utter my pæan in its full sweetness. These long

lines are radii from one centre; aid me to fill the circumference. Then each moment, each act, shall be true. The pupil has found the carbuncle,* but knows not yet how to use it day by day. But 'though his companions wondered at the pupil, the master loved him.' He loves me, my friends. Do ye trust me? Wash the tears and black stains from the records of my life by the benignity of a true glance; make each discord harmony, by striking again the key-note; forget the imperfect interviews, burn the imperfect letters, till at last the full song bursts forth, the key-stone is given from heaven to the arch, the past is all pardoned and atoned for, and we live for ever in the Now." * *

"Henceforth I hope I shall not write letters thus full of childish feeling; for in feeling I am indeed a child, and the least of children. Soon I must return into the Intellect, for *there*, in sight, at least, I am a man, and could write the words very calmly and in steadfast flow. But, lately, the intellect has been so subordinated to the soul, that I am not free to enter the Basilikon, and plead and hear till I am called. But let me not

* Novalis.

stay too long in this Sicilian valley, gathering my flowers, for 'night cometh.' "

"The other evening, while hearing the Creation, in the music of 'There shoots the healing plant,' felt what I would ever feel for suffering souls. Somewhere in nature is the Moly, the Nepenthe, desired from the earliest ages of mankind. No wonder the music dwelt so exultingly on the passage:—

'In native worth and honour clad.'

Yes; even so would I ever see man. I will wait, and never despair, through all the dull years."

"I am 'too fiery.' Even so. Ceres put her foster child in the fire because she loved him. If they thought so before, will they not far more now? Yet I wish to be seen as I am, and would lose all rather than soften away anything. Let my friends be patient and gentle, and teach me to be so. I never promised any one patience or gentleness, for those beautiful traits are not natural to me; but I would learn them. Can I not?"

"Of all the books, and men, and women, that have touched me these weeks past, what has most entered my soul is the music I have heard,—the masterly expression from that violin; the triumph

of the orchestra, after the exploits on the piano; Braham, in his best efforts, when he kept true to the dignity of art; the Messiah, which has been given on two successive Sundays, and the last time in a way that deeply expressed its divine life; but, above all, Beethoven's seventh symphony. What majesty! what depth! what tearful sweetness! what victory! This was truly a fire upon an altar. There are a succession of soaring passages, near the end of the third movement, which touch me most deeply. Though soaring, they hold on with a stress which almost breaks the chains of matter to the hearer. O, how refreshing, after polemics and philosophy, to soar thus on strong wings! Yes, Father, I will wander in dark ways with the crowd, since thou seest best for me to be tied down. But only in thy free ether do I know myself. When I read Beethoven's life, I said, 'I will never repine.' When I heard this symphony, I said, 'I will triumph.' "

"To-day I have finished the life of Raphael, by Quatremere de Quincy, which has so long engaged me. It scarce goes deeper than a *catalogue raisonnée,* but is very complete in its way. I could make all that splendid era alive to me, and

inhale the full flower of the Sanzio. Easily one soars to worship these angels of Genius. To venerate the Saints you must well nigh be one.

" I went out upon the lonely rock which commands so delicious a panoramic view. A very mild breeze had sprung up after the extreme heat. A sunset of the melting kind was succeeded by a perfectly clear moonrise. Here I sat, and thought of Raphael. I was drawn high up in the heaven of beauty, and the mists were dried from the white plumes of contemplation."

" Only by emotion do we know thee, Nature. To lean upon thy heart, and feel its pulses vibrate to our own ;—that is knowledge, for that is love, —the love of infinite beauty, of infinite love. Thought will never make us be born again.

" My fault is that I think I feel *too much.* O that my friends would teach me that 'simple art of not too much!' How can I expect them to bear the ceaseless eloquence of my nature?"

" Often it has seemed that I have come near enough to the limits to see what they are. But suddenly arises afar the Fata Morgana, and tells of new Sicilies, of their flowery valleys and fields of golden grain. Then, as I would draw near,

my little bark is shattered on the rock, and I am left on the cold wave. Yet with my island in sight I do not sink."

"I look not fairly to myself, at the present moment. If noble growths are always slow, others may ripen far worthier fruit than is permitted to my tropical heats and tornadoes. Let me clasp the cross on my breast, as I have done a thousand times before."

"Let me but gather from the earth one full-grown fragrant flower;
Within my bosom let it bloom through its one blooming hour;
Within my bosom let it die, and to its latest breath
My own shall answer, 'Having lived, I shrink not now from death.'
It is this niggard halfness that turns my heart to stone;
'Tis the cup seen, not tasted, that makes the infant moan.
For once let me press firm my lips upon the moment's brow,
For once let me distinctly feel I am all happy now,
And shall seal a blessing upon that moment's brow."

"I was in a state of celestial happiness, which lasted a great while. For months I was all radiant with faith, and love, and life. I began to be myself. Night and day were equally beautiful, and the lowest and highest equally holy. Before, it had seemed as if the Divine only gleamed upon me; but then it poured into and through me a tide of light. I have passed down from the rosy

mountain, now; but I do not forget its pure air, nor how the storms looked as they rolled beneath my feet. I have received my assurance, and if the shadows should lie upon me for a century, they could never make me forgetful of the true hour. Patiently I bide my time."

The last passage describes a peculiar illumination, to which Margaret often referred as the period when her earthly being culminated, and when, in the noon-tide of loving enthusiasm, she felt wholly at one with God, with Man, and the Universe. It was ever after, to her, an earnest that she was of the Elect. In a letter to one of her confidential female friends, she thus fondly looks back to this experience on the mount of transfiguration:—

"You know how, when the leadings of my life found their interpretation, I longed to share my joy with those I prized most; for I felt that if they could but understand the past, we should meet entirely. They received me, some more, some less, according to the degree of intimacy between our natures. But now I have done with the past, and again move forward. The path

looks more difficult, but I am better able to bear its trials. We shall have much communion, even if not in the deepest places. I feel no need of isolation, but only of temperance in thought and speech, that the essence may not evaporate in words, but grow plenteous within. The Life will give me to my own. I am not yet so worthy to love as some others are, because my manifold nature is not yet harmonized enough to be faithful, and I begin to see how much it was the want of a pure music in me that has made the good doubt me. Yet have I been true to the best light I had, and if I am so now, much will be given.

"During my last weeks of solitude I was very happy, and all that had troubled me became clearer. The angel was not weary of waiting for Gunhilde, till she had unravelled her mesh of thought, and seeds of mercy, of purification, were planted in the breast. Whatever the past has been, I feel that I have always been reading on and on, and that the Soul of all souls has been patient in love to mine. New assurances were given me, that if I would be faithful and humble, there was no experience that would not tell its heavenly errand. If shadows have fallen, already

they give way to a fairer if more tempered light; and for the present I am so happy that the spirit kneels.

"Life is richly worth living, with its continual revelations of mighty woe, yet infinite hope; and I take it to my breast. Amid these scenes of beauty, all that is little, foreign, unworthy, vanishes like a dream. So shall it be some time amidst the Everlasting Beauty, when true joy shall begin and never cease."

Filled thus as Margaret was with ecstasy, she was yet more than willing,—even glad,—to bear her share in the universal sorrow. Well she knew that pain must be proportioned to the fineness and fervour of her organization; that the very keenness of her sensibility exposed her to constant disappointment or disgust; that no friend, however faithful, could meet the demands of desires so eager, of sympathies so absorbing. Contrasted with her radiant visions, how dreary looked actual existence; how galling was the friction of petty hindrances; how heavy the yoke of drudging care! Even success seemed failure, when measured by her conscious aim; and expe-

rience had brought out to consciousness excesses and defects, which humbled pride while shaming self-confidence. But suffering as she did with all the intensity of so passionate a nature, Margaret still welcomed the searching discipline. "It is only when Persephone returns from lower earth that she weds Dyonysos, and passes from central sadness into glowing joy," she writes. And again: "I have no belief in beautiful lives; we are born to be mutilated; and the blood must flow till in every vein its place is supplied by the Divine ichor." And she reiterates: "The method of Providence with me is evidently that of 'cross-biassing,' as Herbert hath it." In a word, to her own conscience and to intimate friends she avowed, without reserve, that there was in her "much rude matter that needed to be spiritualized." Comment would but weaken the pathos of the following passages, in which so plainly appears a once wilful temper striving, with child-like faith, to obey:—

"I have been a chosen one; the lesson of renunciation was early, fully taught, and the heart of stone quite broken through. The Great Spirit

wished to leave me no refuge but itself. Convictions have been given, enough to guide me many years if I am steadfast. How deeply, how gratefully I feel this blessing, as the fabric of others' hopes are shivering round me! Peace will not always flow thus softly in my life; but, O, our Father! how many hours has He consecrated to Himself. How often has the Spirit chosen the time, when no ray came from without, to descend upon the orphan life!"

"A humbler, tenderer spirit! Yes, I long for it. But how to gain it? I see no way but prayerfully to bend myself to meet the hour. Let friends be patient with me, and pardon some faint-heartedness. The buds will shiver in the cold air when the sheaths drop. It will not be so long. The word 'Patience' has been spoken; it shall be my talisman. A nobler courage will be given, with gentleness and humility. My conviction is clear that all my troubles are needed, and that one who has had so much light thrown upon the path, has no excuse for faltering steps."

"Could we command enthusiasm; had we an interest with the gods which would light up those

sacred fires at will, we should be even seraphic in our influences. But life, if not a complete waste of wearisome hours, must be checkered with them; and I find that just those very times, when I feel all glowing and radiant in the happiness of receiving and giving out again the divine fluid, are preludes to hours of languor, weariness, and paltry doubt, born of—

> 'The secret soul's mistrust
> To find her fair ethereal wings
> Weigh'd down by vile, degraded dust.'

"To this, all who have chosen or been chosen to a life of thought must submit. Yet I rejoice in my heritage. Should I venture to complain? Perhaps, if I were to reckon up the hours of bodily pain, those passed in society with which I could not coalesce, those of ineffectual endeavour to penetrate the secrets of nature and of art, or, worse still, to reproduce the beautiful in some way for myself, I should find they far outnumbered those of delightful sensation, of full and soothing thought, of gratified tastes and affections, and of proud hope. Yet these last, if few, how lovely, how rich in presage! None, who have known them, can in their worst estate fail to hope

that they may be again upborne to higher, purer blue."

"As I was steeped in the divine tenth book of the Republic, came ——'s letter, in which he so insultingly retracts his engagements. I finished the book obstinately, but could get little good of it; then went to ask comfort of the descending sun in the woods and fields. What a comment it was on the disparity between my pursuits and my situation to receive such a letter while reading that book! However, I will not let life's mean perplexities blur from my eye the page of Plato; nor, if natural tears must be dropt, murmur at a lot, which, with all its bitterness, has given time and opportunity to cherish an even passionate love for Truth and Beauty."

"Black Friday it has been, and my heart is well nigh wearied out. Shall I never be able to act and live with persons of views high as my own? or, at least, with some steadiness of feeling for me to calculate upon? Ah me! what woes within and without; what assaults of folly; what mean distresses; and, oh, what wounds from cherished hands! Were ye the persons who should stab thus? Had I, too, the Roman right to fold

my robe about me decently, and breathe the last sigh! The last! Horrible, indeed, should sobs, deep as these, be drawn to all eternity. But, no; life could not hold out for more than one lease of sorrow. This anguish, however, will be wearied out, as I know by experience, alas! of how many such hours."

"I am reminded to-day of the autumn hours at Jamaica Plain, where, after arranging everything for others that they wanted of me, I found myself, at last, alone in my still home, where everything, for once, reflected my feelings. It was so still, the air seemed full of spirits. How happy I was! with what sweet and solemn happiness! All things had tended to a crisis in me, and I was in a higher state, mentally and spiritually, than I ever was before or shall be again, till death shall introduce me to a new sphere. I purposed to spend the winter in study and self-collection, and to write constantly. I thought I should thus be induced to embody in beautiful forms all that lay in my mind, and that life would ripen into genius. But a very little while these fair hopes bloomed; and, since I was checked then, I do never expect to blossom forth on earth, and all postponements

come naturally. At that time it seemed as if angels left me. Yet, now, I think they still are near. Renunciation appears to be entire, and I quite content; yet, probably, 'tis no such thing, and that work is to be done over and over again."

"Do you believe our prayers avail for one another? and that happiness is good for the soul? Pray, then, for me, that I may have a little peace, —some green and flowery spot, 'mid which my thoughts may rest; yet not upon fallacy, but only upon something genuine. I am deeply homesick, yet where is that home? If not on earth, why should we look to heaven? I would fain truly live wherever I must abide, and bear with full energy on my lot, whatever it is. He, who alone knoweth, will affirm that I have tried to work whole-hearted from an earnest faith. Yet my hand is often languid, and my heart is slow. I would be gone; but whither? I know not; if I cannot make this spot of ground yield the corn and roses, famine must be my lot for ever and ever, surely."

"I remember how at a similar time of perplexity, when there were none to counsel, hardly one to sympathise, and when the conflicting wishes

of so many whom I loved pressed the aching heart on every side, after months of groping and fruitless thought, the merest trifle precipitated the whole mass; all became clear as crystal, and I saw of what use the tedious preparation had been, by the deep content I felt in the result."

"Beethoven! Tasso! It is well to think of you! What sufferings from baseness, from coldness! How rare and momentary were the flashes of joy, of confidence and tenderness, in these noblest lives! Yet could not their genius be repressed. The Eternal Justice lives. O Father, teach the spirit the meaning of sorrow, and light up the generous fires of love and hope and faith, without which I cannot live!"

"What signifies it that Thou dost always give me to drink more deeply of the inner fountains? And why do I seek a reason for these repulsions and strange arrangements of my mortal lot, when I always gain from them a deeper love for all men, and a deeper trust in Thee? Wonderful are thy ways! But lead me the darkest and the coldest as Thou wilt."

"Please, good Genius of my life, to make me very patient, resolute, gentle, while no less ardent;

and after having tried me well, please present, at the end of some thousand years or so, a sphere of congenial and consecutive labours; of heart-felt, heart-filling wishes carried out into life on the instant; of aims obviously, inevitably proportioned to my highest nature. Sometime, in God's good time, let me live as swift and earnest as a flash of the eye. Meanwhile, let me gather force slowly, and drift along lazily, like yonder cloud, and be content to end in a few tears at last."

"To-night I lay on the sofa, and saw how the flame shot up from beneath, through the mass of coal that had been piled above. It shot up in wild beautiful jets, and then unexpectedly sank again, and all was black, unsightly and forlorn. And thus, I thought, is it with my life at present. Yet if the fire beneath persists and conquers, that black dead mass will become all radiant, life-giving, fit for the altar or the domestic hearth. Yes, and it shall be so."

"My tendency at present is to the deepest privacy. Where can I hide till I am given to myself? Yet I love the others more and more. When they are with me I must give them the best from my scrip. I see their infirmities, and

would fain heal them, forgetful of my own! But am I left one moment alone, then, a poor wandering pilgrim, but no saint, I would seek the shrine, and would therein die to the world. Then if from the poor relics some miracles might be wrought, that should be for my fellows. Yet some of the saints were able to work in their generation, for they had renounced all!"

"Forget, if you can, all of petulant or overstrained that may have displeased you in me, and commend me in your prayers to my best self. When, in the solitude of the spirit, comes upon you some air from the distance, a breath of aspiration, of faith, of pure tenderness, then believe that the Power which has guided me so faithfully, emboldens my thoughts to frame a prayer for you."

"Beneath all pain inflicted by Nature, be not only serene, but more; let it avail thee in prayer. Put up, at the moment of greatest suffering, a prayer; not for thy own escape, but for the enfranchisement of some being dear to thee, and the Sovereign Spirit will accept thy ransom."

"Strive, strive, my soul, to be innocent; yes! beneficent. Does any man wound thee? not only

forgive, but work into thy thought intelligence of the kind of pain, that thou mayest never inflict it on another spirit. Then its work is done; it will never search thy whole nature again. O, love much, and be forgiven!"

"No! we cannot leave society while one clod remains unpervaded by divine life. We cannot live and grow in consecrated earth, alone. Let us rather learn to stand up like the Holy Father, and with extended arms bless the whole world."

"It will be happiness indeed, if, on passing this first stage, we are permitted, in some degree, to alleviate the ills of those we love,—to lead them on a little way; to aid them when they call. Often it seems to me, it would be sweet to feel that I had certainly conferred one benefit. All my poor little schemes for others are apparently blighted, and now, as ever, I am referred to the Secular year for the interpretation of my moments."

In one of Margaret's manuscripts is found this beautiful symbol:—"There is a species of Cactus, from whose outer bark, if torn by an ignorant person, there exudes a poisonous liquid; but the

natives, who know the plant, strike to the core, and there find a sweet, refreshing juice, that renews their strength." Surely the preceding extracts prove that she was learning how to draw life-giving virtue from the very heart of evil. No superficial experience of sorrow embittered her with angry despair; but through profound acceptance, she sought to imbibe, from every ill, peace, purity, and gentleness.

The two fiery trials through which she had been made to pass, and through which she was yet to pass again and again,—obstruction to the development of her genius, and loneliness of heart, —were the very furnace needed to burn the dross from her gold, till it could fitly image the Heavenly Refiner. By inherited traits, and indiscreet treatment, self-love had early become so excessive that only severest discipline could transmute it to disinterestedness. Pity for her own misfortunes had, indeed, taught her to curb her youthful scorn for mediocrity, and filled her with considerateness and delicate sensibility. Constant experience, too, of the wonderful modes whereby her fate was shaped by overruling mercy, had chastened her love of personal sway, and her passion

for a commanding career; and Margaret could humble herself,—did humble herself,—with an all-resigning contrition, that was most touching to witness in one naturally so haughty. Of this the following letter to a valued friend gives illustration:—

"I ought, I know, to have laid aside my own cares and griefs, been on the alert for intelligence that would gratify you, and written letters such as would have been of use and given pleasure to my wise, tender, ever faithful friend. But no; I first intruded on your happiness with my sorrowful epistles, and then, because you did not seem to understand my position, with sullen petulance I resolved to write no more. Nay, worse; I tried to harden my heart against you, and felt, 'If you cannot be all, you shall be nothing.'

"It was a bad omen that I lost the locket you gave me, which I had constantly worn. Had that been daily before my eyes, to remind me of all your worth,—of the generosity with which you, a ripe and wise character, received me to the privileges of equal friendship; of the sincerity with which you reproved, and the love with which you pardoned my faults; of how much you taught

me, and bore with from me,—it would have softened the flint of my heart, and I should have relaxed from my isolation.

"How shall I apologize for feelings which I now recognise as having been so cold, so bitter and unjust? I can only say I have suffered greatly, till the tone of my spirits seems destroyed. Since I have been at leisure to realize how very ill I have been, under what constant pain and many annoyances I have kept myself upright, and how, if I have not done my work, I have learned my lesson to the end, I should be inclined to excuse myself for every fault, except this neglect and ingratitude against friends. Yet, if you can forgive I will try to forgive myself, and I do think I shall never so deeply sin again."

Yet, though thus frank to own to herself and to her peers her errors, Margaret cherished a trust in her powers, a confidence in her destiny, and an ideal of her being, place, and influence, so lofty as to be extravagant. In the morning-hour and mountain-air of aspiration, her shadow moved before her, of gigantic size, upon the snow-white vapour.

In accordance with her earnest charge, "Be true as Truth to me," I could not but expose this propensity to self-delusion; and her answer is her best explanation and defence:—"I protest against your applying to me, even in your most transient thought, such an epithet as 'determined exaggeration.' Exaggeration, if you will, but not determined. No; I would have all open to the light, and would let my boughs he pruned when they grow rank and unfruitful, even if I felt the knife to the quick of my being. Very fain would I have a rational modesty, without self-distrust; and may the knowledge of my failures leaven my soul, and check its intemperance. If you saw me wholly, you would not, I think, feel as you do; for you would recognise the force that regulates my life and tempers the ardour with an eventual calmness. You would see, too, that the more I take my flight in poetical enthusiasm, the stronger materials I bring back for my nest. Certainly I am nowise yet an angel; but neither am I an utterly weak woman, and far less a cold intellect. God is rarely afar off. Exquisite nature is all around. Life affords vicissitudes enough to try the energies of the human will. I can pray, I

can act, I can learn, I can constantly immerse myself in the Divine Beauty. But I also need to love my fellow-men, and to meet the responsive glance of my spiritual kindred."

Again, she says:—"I like to hear you express your sense of my defects. The word 'arrogance' does not, indeed, appear to me to be just; probably because I do not understand what you mean. But in due time I doubtless shall; for so repeatedly have you used it, that it must stand for something real in my large and rich, yet irregular and unclarified nature. But though I like to hear you, as I say, and think somehow your reproof does me good, by myself I return to my native bias, and feel as if there was plenty of room in the universe for my faults, and as if I could not spend time in thinking of them, when so many things interest me more. I have no defiance or coldness, however, as to these spiritual facts which I do not know; but I must follow my own law, and bide my time, even if, like Œdipus, I should return a criminal, blind and outcast, to ask aid from the gods. Such possibilities, I confess, give me great awe; for I have more sense than most, of the tragic depths that may open

suddenly in the life. Yet, believing in God, anguish cannot be despair, nor guilt perdition. I feel sure that I have never wilfully chosen, and that my life has been docile to such truth as was shown it. In an environment like mine, what may have seemed too lofty or ambitious in my character was absolutely needed to keep the heart from breaking, and enthusiasm from extinction."

Such Egoism as this, though lacking the angel grace of unconsciousness, has a stoical grandeur that commands respect. Indeed, in all that Margaret spoke, wrote, or did, no cynic could detect the taint of meanness. Her elation came not from opium fumes of vanity, inhaled in close chambers of conceit, but from the stimulus of sunshine, fresh breezes, and swift movement upon the winged steed of poesy. Her existence was bright with romantic interest to herself. There was an amplitude and elevation in her aim, which were worthy, as she felt, of human honour and of heavenly aid; and she was buoyed up by a courageous good-will, amidst all evils, that she knew would have been recognised as heroic in the chivalric times, when "every morning brought a noble chance." Neither was her self-regard of an

engrossing temper. On the contrary, the sense of personal dignity taught her the worth of the lowliest human being; and her intense desire for harmonious conditions quickened a boundless compassion for the squalid, downcast, and drudging multitude. She aspired to live in majestic fulness of benignant and joyful activity, leaving a track of light with every footstep; and, like the radiant Iduna, bearing to man the golden apples of immortality, she would have made each meeting with her fellows rich with some boon that should never fade, but brighten in bloom for ever.

This characteristic self-esteem determined the quality of Margaret's influence, which was singularly penetrating, and most benificent where most deeply and continuously felt. Chance acquaintance with her, like a breath from the tropics, might have prematurely burst the buds of feeling in sensitive hearts, leaving after blight and barrenness. Natures, small in compass and of fragile substance, might have been distorted and shattered by attempts to mould themselves on her grand model. And in her seeming unchartered impulses,—whose latent law was honourable integrity,—eccentric spirits might have found encou-

ragement for capricious licence. Her morbid subjectivity, too, might, by contagion, have affected others with undue self-consciousness. And, finally, even intimate friends might have been tempted, by her flattering love, to exaggerate their own importance, until they recognised that her regard for them was but one niche in a Pantheon at whose every shrine she offered incense. But these ill effects were superficial accidents. The peculiarity of her power was to make all who were in concert with her feel the miracle of existence. She lived herself with such concentrated force in the moments, that she was always effulgent with thought and affection,—with conscience, courage, resource, decision, a penetrating and forecasting wisdom. Hence, to associates, her presence seemed to touch even common scenes and drudging cares with splendour, as when, through the scud of a rain-storm, sunbeams break from serene blue openings, crowning familiar things with sudden glory. By manifold sympathies, yet central unity, she seemed in herself to be a goodly company, and her words and deeds imparted the virtue of a collective life. So tender was her affection, that, like a guardian genius, she

made her friends' souls her own, and identified herself with their fortunes; and yet, so pure and high withal was her justice, that, in her recognition of their past success and present claims, there came a summons for fresh endeavour after the perfect. The very thought of her roused manliness to emulate the vigorous freedom with which one was assured that, wherever placed, she was that instant acting; and the mere mention of her name was an inspiration of magnanimity, and faithfulness, and truth.

"'Sincere has been their striving; great their love,'

is a sufficient apology for any life," wrote Margaret; and how preeminently were these words descriptive of herself. Hers was indeed

"The equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will,
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

This indomitable aspiration found utterance in the following verses, on

"SUB ROSA CRUX.

"In times of old, as we are told,
When men more childlike at the feet
Of Jesus sat than now,
A chivalry was known, more bold
Than ours, and yet of stricter vow,
And worship more complete.

"Knights of the Rosy Cross! they bore
Its weight within the breast, but wore
Without the sign, in glistening ruby bright.
The gall and vinegar they drank alone,
But to the world at large would only own
The wine of faith, sparkling with rosy light.

"They knew the secret of the sacred oil,
Which, pour'd upon the prophet's head,
Could keep him wise and pure for aye,
Apart from all that might distract or soil;
With this their lamps they fed,
Which burn in their sepulchral shrines,
Unfading night and day.

"The pass-word now is lost
To that initiation full and free;
Daily we pay the cost
Of our slow schooling for divine degree.
We know no means to feed an undying lamp,
Our lights go out in every wind and damp.

"We wear the cross of Ebony and Gold,
Upon a dark back-ground a form of light,
A heavenly hope within a bosom cold,
A starry promise in a frequent night;
And oft the dying lamp must trim again,
For we are conscious, thoughtful, striving men.

"Yet be we faithful to this present trust,
Clasp to a heart resign'd this faithful Must;
Though deepest dark our efforts should enfold,
Unwearied mine to find the vein of gold:
Forget not oft to waft the prayer on high;—
The rosy dawn again shall fill the sky.

"And by that lovely light all truth reveal'd,—
The cherish'd forms, which sad distrust conceal'd,
Transfigured, yet the same, will round us stand,
The kindred angels of a faithful band;
Ruby and ebon cross then cast aside,
No lamp more needed, for the night has died.

"'Be to the best thou knowest ever true,'
Is all the creed.
Then be thy talisman of rosy hue,
Or fenced with thorns, that wearing, thou must bleed,
Or, gentle pledge of love's prophetic view,
The faithful steps it will securely lead.

"Happy are all who reach that distant shore,
And bathe in heavenly day;
Happiest are those who high the banner bore,
To marshal others on the way,
Or waited for them, fainting and way-worn,
By burthens overborne."

END OF VOL. II.

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 05495 455 5

1892